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Getting ready for autumn.

# THE SOCIABLE SAND WITCH

BY
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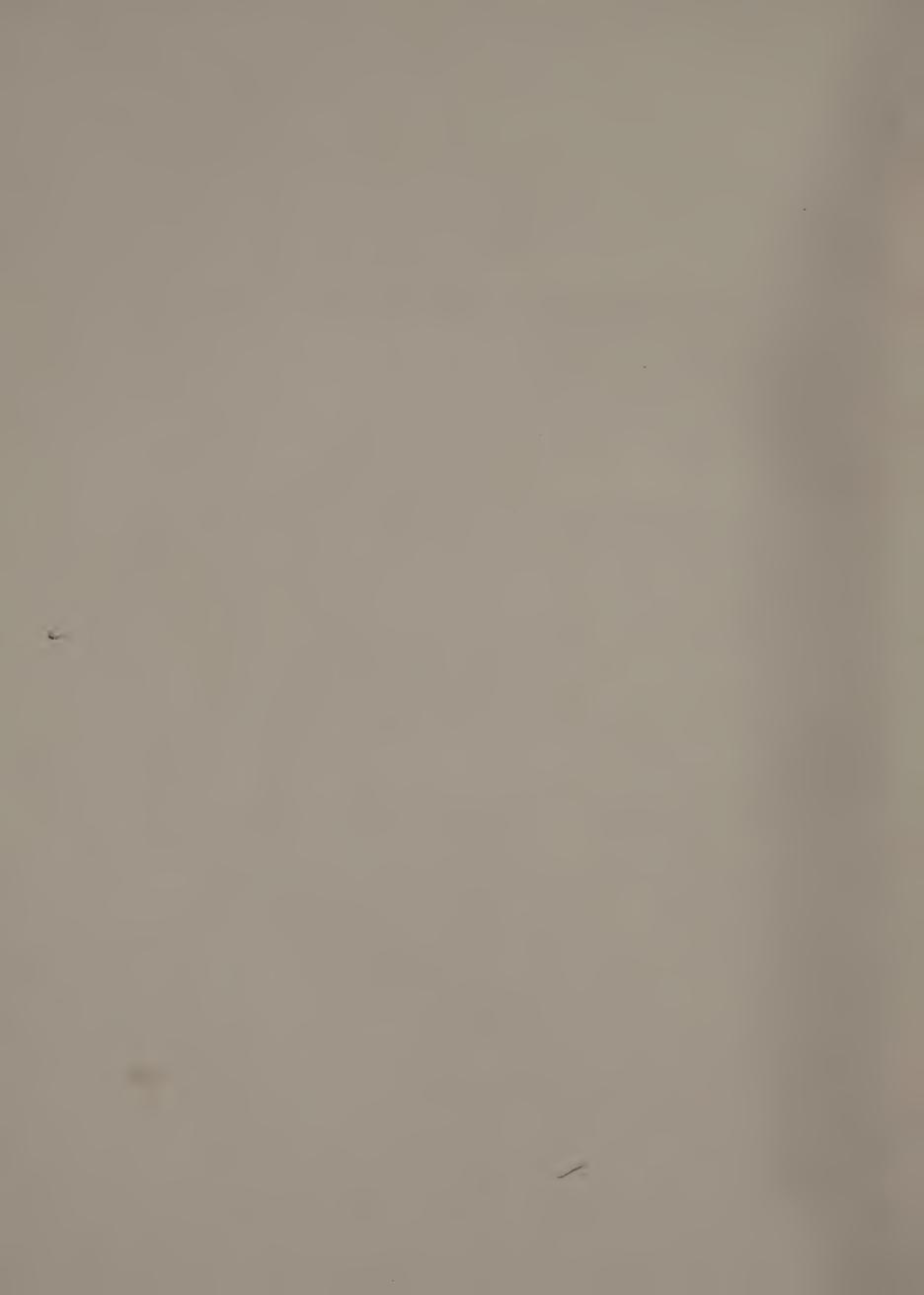
#### CONTENTS

| Тне  | SOCIABLE SAND  | Wit  | СН  | •  | • | • | 4 | • | • | • | PAGE |
|------|----------------|------|-----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| THE  | FOUNTAIN OF R  | ICH  | ES  | •  | • | • |   | • | • |   | 26   |
| Овят | INATE TOWN .   | •    | •   | •  | • | • | • | • |   | • | 51   |
| Тоов | BAD THE TAILOR | •    | •   | •  | • | • | ٠ |   | • | ٠ | 72   |
| Тне  | Snooping-Bug   | •    | •   | •  | • | • | • | • | • | • | 90   |
| Тне  | Wrong Jack     | •    | •   | •  | • | • | • | • | • | • | 110  |
| Тне  | SECOND STORY B | 3rot | HEI | RS | • | • | • | • | • | • | 130  |
| Тне  | IMAGINARY ISLA | ND   | •   | •  | • | • | • |   | • | • | 150  |
| Тне  | Dancing Pearl  | •    | •   | •  | • | • | • | • | • | • | 170  |
| Тне  | INHERITED PRIN | CESS | S   | •  | • |   | • | • |   | ٠ | 190  |



### **ILLUSTRATIONS**

| Getting ready for autumn (in color; page 51) Frontispiec             |   |
|--|---|
| So Junior held his nose tight  |   |
| It was raining cats and dogs 3                                       | 5 |
| The Poppykok pasted a magic postage stamp on his cheek               | 3 |
| He began tearing at his clothes with all his might. 79               | 9 |
| The jar broke into a thousand pieces 9                               | 5 |
| Out of the hole came a giant   | 1 |
| He turned and whipped the fan open 14                                | 5 |
| Upon his vision burst a band of coal-black savages . 16              | 1 |
| Floo the Wizard at work . (in color) facing 17:                      | 2 |
| He watched her whirl about   | 5 |
| The minute the parade was over, he started off (in color) facing 192 | 2 |
| Underneath the window sat the twenty-headed Gallopus                 | 2 |



## THE SOCIABLE SAND WITCH

Of all the witches that may be found in all the fairy tales ever told there is none more delightfully sociable than the Sand Witch. This Witch, who lives underneath the heaps of sand at the ocean's edge, where, in the summertime, you dig with your shovel, is not at all like other witches. never rides on a broomstick, and she never goes down chimneys. In the first place there are no broomsticks or chimneys on the beach at the seashore, and in the second place she would not know how to ride on a broomstick or climb down a chimney, if there were. All the Sand Witch knows how to do is to sink into the sand when anything scares her, and to come up through the sand when she sees a chance to get acquainted with a person she never was acquainted with before. So now you know what a Sand Witch is. And if Junior Jenks, seven years old, and dreadfully sunburnt,

had known what you know, he would have been much better prepared to face the one that came up right under his nose all of a sudden one hot July morning.

Junior was supposed to be in bathing. His mother, and his father, and his sister were in among the breakers having a fine time, but Junior, although he was wearing a bathing suit just like they were, preferred the good old sandy, sunny beach where foam-crested waves could not tumble you over and over, and fill your mouth with salt water when you yelled. He had tried bathing once, and no amount of coaxing could induce him to try it again, so his folks left him to play by himself while they took their dip.

The first Junior knew about the Sand Witch was when the tip end of a steeple hat began to come up through the sand in front of him. Up, up it came until the whole hat was showing; then followed a long nose, two big, black eyes, a big mouth, and a sharp pointed chin; after that the rest of the Sand Witch followed very quickly, until

at last she stood before him as cool as a cucumber.

"Well," she said, not paying the slightest attention to the way Junior's hair was standing up, "here I am. I've heard you digging for some days. I suppose you thought you'd never find me."

"Find you?" said Junior, staring with all his might. "I wasn't trying to find you. I never knew there was such a person. I wasn't trying to find anything."

"You weren't?" said the Sand Witch. "Then what in the name of peace were you digging for?"

"Why," said Junior "I—I—I was just digging for fun."

"Well," said the Witch, "did you find any fun?"

"Find any fun? Of course not! You don't find fun, you—you just have it."

The Sand Witch pushed her hat on one side and scratched her head in perplexity. "I don't think I understand. You said you were digging for fun, didn't you? And when I asked if you found any fun you say you don't find fun, you just have it.

Well, if you have it, what do you dig for? Tell me that?"

But though she waited very politely for Junior to tell her, he made no answer. He just looked at her with his mouth open, and wiggled his bare toes deeper into the sand.

"My goodness," said the Witch, at last, "are you deaf? I asked you a question."

"I—I know," said the boy, "but—but I can't tell you. I—I don't know how."

"Suffering sea serpents!" exclaimed the newcomer. "You certainly are the queerest I ever met!"

"No queerer than you are," responded Junior, indignantly. "You're the queerest person I ever met! Coming up through the sand in such a way!"

"Humph!" retorted the Witch. "How else could I come up? There's nothing else here but sand to come up through. You can't blame that on me."

"Oh, I'm not blaming you," said Junior. "I'm

only telling you. I don't suppose it is your fault that all this sand is here. It only seemed so strange for a person to be underneath it. You don't live there, do you?"

"I certainly do!" replied the other; "and all my family, too."

"Underneath the sand? Why, I never heard of such a thing! I—I can't believe it!"

"Now look here," said the Sand Witch. "I won't let anybody talk that way to me. If you don't believe I live underneath the sand come on down and see for yourself. Just hold your nose tight with the fingers of your right hand, put your left hand above your head, draw in a deep breath; and down you go, like this."

Thrusting a hand above her head, and grasping her nose, she took a deep breath, and zip—she sank through the sand like a flash, just the way Junior's father always sank into the ocean when he was bathing. Then bing—the next moment she popped up again, smiling cheerfully. "See how easy it is? Come on, now you try it!"

"No, thank you," said Junior. "I'd rather stay on top of the sand."

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed the Sand Witch, "I never saw such a 'fraid cat! You're not only afraid to take a sea bath, but you don't even dare to take a sand bath. I'd be ashamed!"

"Well, be ashamed, if you want!" said Junior, hotly. "I don't care! I don't like baths of any kind; in the ocean, or in the sand; or even in the bathtub. What's the use of them, anyway?"

And with that he started digging again. And then it was that the Sand Witch showed what a thoroughly sociable nature she had, for although the boy had turned his back to her and was paying no attention, she wasn't in the least discouraged. "Did you ever see a crab wait on the table?" she asked.

"Why, no," said Junior, whirling about and looking very much interested. "I thought all a crab could do was to pinch you."

"Not at all! They wait on the table fine if you let'em. And I've got a shooting starfish, too,

that can't be beat. You come on down underneath the sand, and I'll show you. Oh, I've got dozens of delightful things down there. Why, the sand pies I make are the most delicious things you ever tasted. And I know you'll laugh when you see the clams skip rope."

Well, you may be sure all this sounded very, very good to Junior. He had often heard of star-fish, but never of shooting starfish. A crab waiting on the table was bound to be interesting; and a clam skipping rope, even more so. As for sand pies, he had often made them himself, but never so they could be eaten. If there was a way to do the trick, he'd like to know it. In fact, it was like being promised a free ticket to the circus. So throwing his bucket and shovel aside he got to his feet without further parley.

"Very well," he said, "I'll go with you. But I've got to be back in a half hour. My father is going to take me sailing as soon as he is through with his bath."

"That's all right," said the Sand Witch.

"When you're ready to go back, you just go back. And now do just as I do."

So Junior held his nose tight, put his other hand above his head, took a deep breath, and then bing—he and the Sand Witch sank through the sand in a jiffy, and the next moment came out underneath it.

"Oh!" cried the boy.

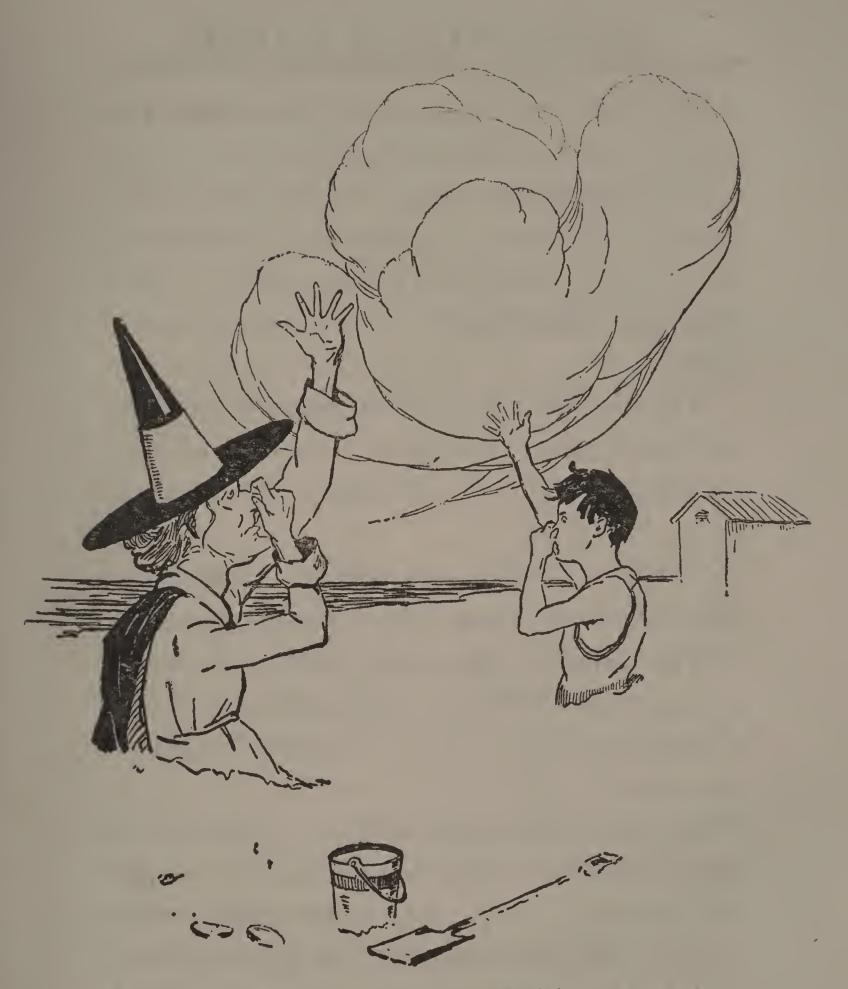
All about was a beautiful, white, glistening, sandy city; houses, fences, streets, all of sand. The place where they were standing seemed to be a sort of park with cute, little, carved, sandy benches amid the sand grass, and several tall fountains spouting sand in a fine spray.

"Well, how do you like it?" asked the Witch.

"Fine!" said Junior; "but where are the clams and the—"

"My goodness," said the Witch, "but you are in a hurry. I've got to find my children, first. You don't expect me to neglect my children that way, do you?"

"Oh, no," replied the boy, "of course not. But



So Junior held his nose tight

—but I didn't come here to see your children, you know. I can see children anywhere."

"Not children like mine," said the Sand Witch, proudly. "If there is a more beautiful child than little Lettuce Sand Witch I'd like to see it. And as for dear little Ham Sand Witch, he is the *cutest* thing."

"Ham Sand Witch! Lettuce Sand Witch!" exclaimed Junior. "Are those the names of your children? Why—why, it sounds like things to eat!"

"Well," said Mrs. Sand Witch, "why not? Both of them are certainly sweet enough to eat."

With that she opened her mouth and gave a piercing yell. "Children!" she shrieked. "Come to mother, quick! I've got a little boy for you to play with!"

And presently, racing across the park toward them came the two little Sand Witches, one a girl and the other a boy. But though their mother thought them sweet enough to eat, Junior did not. Both had long, pointed noses and chins; big, black eyes and dreadfully wide mouths, just like Mrs. Sand Witch. When they saw Junior they just stood and stared, and gnashed their teeth.

"Hello!" said Ham Sand Witch, after a moment. "Who are you?"

"Yes," said his sister, Lettuce Sand Witch, walking about and examining Junior from all sides, who are you, and where did you come from?"

"I'm Junior Jenks," replied Junior, "and I came from the beach up above to see the clams skip rope."

"Pooh!" said Ham Sand Witch. "That's no fun! We're not going to play with them any more. They want you to turn the rope all the time. If you don't, they nip you."

"Well," said Junior, "if I can't see the clams skip rope, let me see the starfish shoot."

"All right," said Lettuce Sand Witch, "we don't mind. But you'll have to pay his fare if you want to see him shoot."

"Pay his fare?" responded Junior. "I don't know what you mean."

"Ahem!" put in Mrs. Sand Witch. "Perhaps you thought he shot with a gun. Well, he doesn't. He chutes with a chute! And you know as well as I do, you've got to pay your fare when you chute with a chute."

"Oh," cried Junior, in dismay, "I see. But—but I haven't any money."

"Then," said Mrs. Sand Witch, "if you want to see him chute, we'll have to charge it to your father. How about it?"

"Well," said the boy, "I guess he won't mind, as long as I never saw a fish chute before."

So Mrs. Sand Witch took the children to the chute the chutes on the other side of the park, and told the proprietor, a very shaky old jellyfish, that Junior would pay the starfish's fare, and to kindly coax him out of the ocean to take a ride.

So the jellyfish went to the ocean, which was just back of the chute the chutes, and yelled for the starfish to hurry up if he wanted a free ride. And the starfish, highly flattered at the invitation, lost no time in making his appearance.

"I'm awfully obliged to you," he said to Junior, as he whirled about in the sand to dry himself. "And to show I am I'll let you sit with me."

So Junior and the starfish, and Ham Sand Witch, and Lettuce Sand Witch, climbed into the car and went shooting around the chute the chutes.

"Isn't it great?" shrieked the starfish, as they scooted down the inclines. "It makes your insides turn somersaults! It beats swimming all hollow, I think. If ever I get rich I'm going to build one of these things in the ocean."

And when at last the ride came to an end he insisted on Junior shaking hands with every one of his five points. "Any time you fall overboard when you're out sailing," he said, "stop in and see me. My place is the third clump of coral just beyond the bathing grounds. Good-by!"

"Now," said Mrs. Sand Witch, who had waited while the children and the starfish took their ride, "I've got to go home and get dinner. You children amuse yourselves, and after dinner maybe I'll take you to see the mermaids."

So Junior, and Ham Sand Witch, and Lettuce Sand Witch, wandered about the park hand in hand. Although the little Sand Witches were so ugly, Junior was beginning to like them right well, now that he was getting used to them; and they seemed to like him, too.

"Why don't you stay all summer?" said Ham Sand Witch. "We could have lots of fun."

"I'd like to," said Junior, "if my father and mother and sister were here."

"Well, why not ask 'em to come down?" suggested Lettuce Sand Witch.

"Oh, they wouldn't do it," said the boy. "I know they wouldn't. They like it better on the boardwalk and at the hotel. And now let's see if we can't find those clams that skip rope."

"All right," said Ham Sand Witch, "but if we do, they'll make you turn for 'em just so. They're awfully snappish."

And sure enough when presently they came upon the clams sitting on a bench near one of the fountains, and Junior asked if they would skip rope for him, they said they would if he turned for them just so.

"I don't know what you mean by 'just so,' " said Junior, "but I'll do my best."

And he certainly did do the best he could. While Ham Sand Witch held one end of the rope he turned it very, very carefully as the two big, white clams solemnly skipped. They were slow enough until they got warmed up.

"Now give us butter and eggs," said one of the clams, suddenly.

"Butter and eggs?" said Junior. "You mean pepper and salt, don't you?"

"I certainly do not," said the clam who had spoken. "I mean butter and eggs. Pepper and salt is fast, but butter and eggs is lightning; and see that you do it right."

But though Junior turned the rope with all his might and main he simply could not turn it fast enough to suit the clams. And presently with a scream of rage they rushed at him snapping their shells angrily.

#### THE SOCIABLE SAND WITCH

"Run! Run!" shrieked Lettuce Sand Witch, "or they'll nip you!"

"Run! Run!" yelled Ham Sand Witch.
"They pinch awful."

And maybe Junior did not run. And maybe the clams did not run after him. But luckily, just as they were about to grab him, one of them tripped and fell and cracked its shell, and wept so when it did, that the other clam stopped to help it. So Junior, and Ham Sand Witch, and Lettuce Sand Witch finally reached Mrs. Sand Witch's house and were soon safe indoors.

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Sand Witch, as the children stood before her, panting. "What has happened?"

And after they had told her she said they were never even to *speak* to those clams again. "I never did care for clams, anyhow," she said. "They're always disagreeing with people."

Then she told them that dinner was almost ready and that she knew they would enjoy it. "We've got the most delicious sandpaper garnished with seaweed," she added; "to say nothing of sand pies for dessert."

And when she said that both the little Sand Witches jumped up and down with glee, and cheered and cheered. "Oh, goody!" they cried. And Junior, being a very polite little boy, cheered also, although he felt quite sure that while he might like the sand pies, he never, never would care for sandpaper garnished with seaweed.

And then as he sat in the parlor waiting for dinner to be served, he heard a clatter of dishes in the next room, and peeping in, gave a gasp of astonishment, for there was a big, green-backed crab putting the dinner on the table, singing cheerfully to itself as it did so. And this is what it sang:

'Twas a beautiful day at the bottom of the bay
In the mud where I always dwell,
But being a crab I longed to grab
At the bathers and make 'em yell.
So I took a swim to the water's rim
And looked about for a toe;
And then as I looked some fellow hooked
Me out of the water-o.

With a piercing yell of joy,
And I do declare I'd still be there
Except for his little boy.
But that blessed lad unlike his dad,
With fright he simply roared—
He gave one squeal as I pinched his heel,
And kicked me overboard.
And now the aim of my humble life
Is to find that boy some way,
And to thank him quick for the kindly kick
That saved my life that day.

And as the crab sang a funny feeling came over Junior. Only a week or so before he had been out with his father in a boat, and his father had caught a crab on his fishing line, and pulled it into the boat. And Junior, being in his bare feet, had been awfully scared for fear the crab would pinch him, and then, sure enough, before he could get his feet up on the seat, it did, right on the heel; and in trying to kick it loose, he kicked it overboard. He wondered if this could possibly be the same crab.

So when they all went in to dinner he looked at the crab carefully to see if he could recognize it, but as one crab looks like another, he couldn't be sure. But the minute the crab saw him, it was very different.

"Oh!" gasped the creature he had been observing, staggering backward and almost dropping the dish of sandpaper and seaweed it was carrying. Then, putting the dish carefully on the table, it bent over and looked Junior in the face.

"'Tis he!" it shrieked, with a dramatic gesture.
"'Tis he! my rescuer!" And if Junior had not leaped from his seat it would have thrown its claws about his neck.

"'Tis he?" exclaimed Mrs. Sand Witch, frowning at her amphibian servant. "What do you mean by 'tis he'? What are you talking about? This is a nice way to behave before company."

But after the creature had explained matters, Mrs. Sand Witch and the little Sand Witches were even more excited than the crab was.

"My, my, how romantic!" said Mrs. Sand Witch; "and how lucky it is, Bertha, that you're a lady crab. Now you can marry him!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Bertha, the crab, trembling violently. "I never thought of that! I'd just love to, if only to show my gratitude. But—but maybe he wouldn't care to marry me. Would you?" she asked, turning to Junior, who had once more resumed his seat.

"Marry you?" said the boy, wishing he hadn't sat down again. "Why—why, of course not. Why—why—I—I—why, I'm only a boy. I—I, my mother wouldn't let me get married. I know she wouldn't."

"Oh, bother your mother!" retorted the crab, crossly. "She'll never know anything about it. We'll get married and settle down here, and she'll never know where you are. And now, when shall it be?"

"Never!" shouted Junior, springing up once more. "I'll never do it. Boys never marry crabs. Boys never marry anybody!"

"Never marry anybody?" put in Mrs. Sand Witch. "Dear me, then how do they ever get married?" "They don't *get* married," said Junior. "They —they just play."

"Well," responded the crab, "you can play. I won't mind. You needn't stop playing just because you're married to me. No, sir-ee!"

But Junior shook his head. "I'm very sorry," he said, "but I can't do it." And though the crab kept on coaxing and coaxing, he wouldn't give in.

"Now look here," said Mrs. Sand Witch, "if we keep this up the dinner will be cold. So run along, Bertha, and maybe after Junior has had a good dinner he will change his mind."

"No, I won't," said Junior. "And what is more I want to go back to the beach right off. I told you I was going sailing with my father in a half hour."

"But," replied Mrs. Sand Witch, as she smacked her lips over the last of her sandpaper, "that was before you were engaged to be married."

"I'm not engaged to be married," stormed the boy; "and if I had known you were this kind of a person I'd never have come down here."

"Now, now," said Mrs. Sand Witch, "I'm every

bit as old as your mother, and I know what is best for you. You wouldn't like me to spank you, would you?"

And when she said that, Junior decided he might as well give himself up for lost. Soon as a person began to say she knew what was best for you, you might as well make up your mind, you are done for. "Good gracious!" he said to himself, "whatever shall I do?"

And when dinner was over, and he went into the park again with the little Sand Witches, he was so depressed he wouldn't play or do anything; and finally, Ham Sand Witch got tired trying to cheer him up and went off to play with some other sand witches, leaving Junior and Lettuce Sand Witch sitting on a bench side by side.

Lettuce Sand Witch, swinging her legs violently, was looking at him. Then she slid along the bench and snuggled up close. "I'm awfully sorry," she said. "And I think it's dreadfully mean to make you marry Bertha. She's not pretty

like I am, is she? Wouldn't you rather marry me?"

And the minute she said that, Junior had a bright idea. He didn't want to marry Lettuce Sand Witch any more than he wanted to marry the grateful Bertha, one was as ugly as the other; but maybe if he let on he wanted to, she might tell him how to get back to the beach. So he snuggled up to her when she snuggled up to him.

"Maybe I would," he said, smiling at her. "But I couldn't possibly do it until I asked my mother. You tell me how to get back to the beach, and if my mother says I can marry you, I'll come right back and do it."

"Oh, will you, really?" cried Lettuce Sand Witch, springing to her feet and clapping her hands. "Then I'll tell you how to get to the beach, or at least the way my mother gets there. She stands up straight like this; holds her nose with her left hand and puts her right hand above her head; then she blows out her breath instead of drawing it

in; and up she goes. And now, you won't forget to come back?"

"No, indeed," said Junior, "I'll do just as I promised. If my mother tells me to come back and marry you, I'll do it. And now, good-by, and thank you very, very much."

The next instant he stood up as straight as he could, grasped his nose with his left hand, put his right hand above his head, blew out his breath, and bing—he shot up through the sand, and found himself right alongside of his bucket and shovel.

He looked about. Everything was just the same. The sun was shining, people were still in bathing, but nowhere among them could he see his father, or mother, or sister. And then, presently they came tearing over the sand toward him.

"You bad boy!" scolded Mrs. Jenks. "Where have you been? We've been terribly worried! How dare you go off by yourself? Where were you, I say?"

"Why-why-" began Junior.

Then he stopped. What was the use? He

knew they wouldn't believe him. And if he asked his mother if he could go back and marry Lettuce Sand Witch as he promised he would ask her, she would say he was sick or something, and make him go to bed. So he just dug his toes into the sand and said nothing.

And that is why poor little Lettuce Sand Witch is still waiting underneath the sand for Junior Jenks to come marry her. And that is why Junior Jenks keeps looking about so queerly when he plays on the beach by himself. He is taking no chances of another sociable sand witch popping up in his neighborhood.

## THE FOUNTAIN OF RICHES

No matter what other mistakes you may make in your lifetime, never make the mistake of renting a cottage from an ogre. If you do, the chances are you will bitterly regret it, as did Hak, the aged woodcutter.

Hak, was an old, old man who lived in a forest with his little grandson, Omo, whose father and mother were dead; and who earned his living by cutting down trees and chopping them into firewood. The cottage that Hak and his grandson lived in belonged to an ogre, and the rent the old man paid for it was not very much; and as long as he kept his health and strength, he got along very nicely. But one day, while cutting down a tree he tripped and fell, and before he could get out of the way the falling tree struck him and broke his leg. And after Omo had dragged him back into the cot-

tage all he could do was to lie on his bed and groan, and wait for the leg to get well.

"Goodness gracious!" he said to the boy, "What shall we do? I won't be able to work for days and days, and there will be the rent to pay; to say nothing of the doctor's bill."

"Well," said Omo, "the rent and the doctor's bill will have to wait. So don't worry."

"I have to worry," replied the old man. "The doctor may wait for *his* bill, but the person who owns this cottage will not wait for his rent; no sir-ee."

Then he told Omo that the cottage belonged to an ogre. "He let me have it very cheap, but only for a certain reason. What do you think that reason was?"

"I don't know," replied Omo. "What was it?"

"That he should be allowed to make you into a dumpling for dessert if I did not pay the rent every month without fail."

"Oh," said Omo, his eyes very big. "I don't wonder you are worried. It—it makes me feel

worried, too! Why did you ever make such a bargain?"

"Well," said his grandfather, groaning worse than ever, "I never thought for a minute that I would ever have my leg broken, and I was so very, very poor I simply had to have a cottage cheap. But now, I'll not only lose the cottage, but you also. I guess I might as well die."

"Don't you do it!" responded Omo. "I haven't been made into a dumpling yet, and I'm not going to be, if I can help it. I'll go into the city and get the doctor, and while I'm there I'll try to earn enough money to pay the rent."

But Omo's grandfather only shook his head. "You're a plucky boy, Omo," he said, "but you'll never be able to do it. How can a boy of seven earn anything?"

"Well, I can try, can't I?" said Omo. "You can't do anything if you don't try."

So pulling his cap down over his curls, and tucking some bread and cheese into his pocket, he set off for town. But when he arrived at the doctor's office he found that the waiting room was crowded with people, and that he would have to wait his turn.

"Oh, dear," he sighed, as he sat down next to a little old lady with a frilled bonnet on her head, "this is most unfortunate. My grandfather ought to be attended to right away."

"Well, he won't get attended to right away," said the old lady, "I can tell you that! This doctor charges by the length of time you wait in his office, so he *never* hurries. I've been here three months."

"Three months!" cried the boy. "Oh, I couldn't possibly wait three months, or even three days. I'm in a hurry! I've got to earn enough money to pay the rent of our cottage, or the ogre who owns it will turn me into a dumpling and eat me."

And when he said that everybody in the waiting room twisted about and looked at him. "He seems to have a fever," they said.

"See here," said the old lady, "are you sure you're not sick instead of your grandfather?"

"I'm perfectly well!" exclaimed Omo, indignantly.

"Then you must be joking," responded the other.

"No, I'm not," said Omo. "I mean every word I said. I'm in great trouble."

"Come on, let's go outside! We'll save money by it anyway!"

Then as they walked along the street Omo told her all about his grandfather's accident, and how important it was that the rent should be paid.

"Ha!" exclaimed the old lady. "I know that ogre! His name is Gub and he lives on the hill on the other side of the city. I often used to help people out of his clutches. I'm a retired fairy god-mother—haven't been in business for years and years—but your story interests me. I've a good mind to help you!"

"Oh, if you only would!" said Omo, "I'd be awfully obliged. You see, it's not very pleasant to be made into a dumpling, and have my grand-

father put out of his cottage when he has a broken leg. Please, please, help me!"

"Well," said the old lady, as she led the way into a little house with a peaked roof, "I only help people who help themselves. Can you help yourself?"

"Certainly!" said Omo. "Just offer me something and watch me help myself."

"Very well then, I will," responded the fairy godmother. Going to a golden desk in a corner she took from it a silver key. "This is the key that turns on the Fountain of Riches in the City of Ootch. All you have to do is to put the key in the keyhole at the base of the fountain, give three turns to the right, three turns to the left, and one turn in the middle, and instantly the fountain will commence to spout gold pieces enough to bury you. But you must promise me this, be sure and turn the fountain off as soon as you get enough gold pieces to fill your cap; and be sure and bring the key back to me, for I wouldn't want that key to be left in

Ootch, or that fountain to be left spouting, for anything."

"Why not?" asked Omo. "What's the use of a fountain if it doesn't spout?"

"Well, you see I presented that fountain to the city of Ootch because they named the city after my great aunt's trained cockatoo, but after the fountain started spouting gold pieces everybody had so much money they all stopped working, and it almost ruined them. The butcher stopped selling meat, and the baker stopped baking bread, and the tailor stopped making clothes. Everybody stopped doing everything, and pretty soon, although everybody had plenty of money, you couldn't buy anything because nobody would take the trouble to keep store when they could get money from the fountain. So I locked the fountain up and took the key with me. And after the people of Ootch had spent some of the money they had, and lost the rest, and could not get any more without working for it, everything got all right again. And that's the reason I don't want the

fountain to keep on spouting again, or want you to leave the key behind you."

"I should think not," said Omo. "It seems as bad to be too rich as it is to be too poor. I'll be very careful about shutting the fountain off, and I won't forget to bring back the key. And now how do I get to the city of Ootch?"

"Just open my back door," said the fairy godmother, handing him the key, "step out on the step, and then step off. And I do hope you won't find it raining, for when it rains in Ootch, it rains cats and dogs."

So Omo opened the fairy godmother's back door and stepped out on the step, and as he stood there all he saw before him was a pretty little garden. Then, he stepped off the step, and bing—he was in a queer looking city, and the garden and the back step, and the cottage, and the fairy godmother, had all disappeared. And in addition it was raining cats and dogs; regular, real cats and dogs.

"Ouch!" cried Omo, as a fat maltese fell kerplunk on his head, yowling like anything. "Whee!" he yelled, as a fox terrier dropped with a thud on his shoulder and barked in his ear. And then, as black, white, brown, yellow cats of every color, and dogs, big, little and medium, began pouring on him and around him, all howling, and barking, and spitting at the same time, he made a rush for a small building, open at the sides but with a dome like roof of metal, where a man was standing.

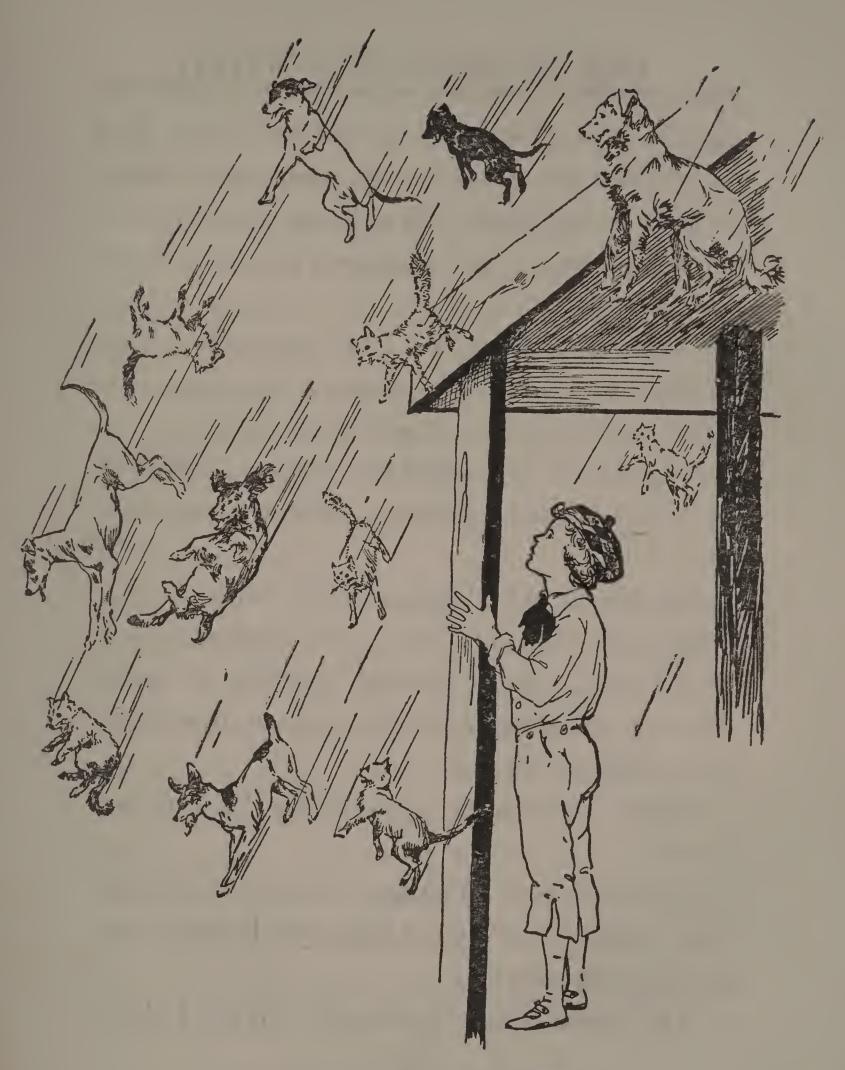
"Quite a shower, isn't it?" said the man, as Omo reached the shelter.

"A shower," gasped Omo, "why—why, I think it's much more than a shower. And—and look what's coming down—cats and dogs!"

"Well," said the other, "why not? That's what always comes down, isn't it? That is why we build these cat and dog proof pavilions for use on rainy days. Now if it rained elephants, that would be an inconvenience."

"I should say so," replied the boy. "But does it always rain like this?"

"Oh, sometimes it's a great deal worse. I re-



It was raining cats and dogs

member about two years ago I was caught in a storm and eight cats, all in one lump, and fighting as hard as they could, fell right on top of me as I crossed the street, and I assure you, sir, I almost lost my temper."

"Well," said Omo, "it's lucky they melt as soon as they reach the ground or you'd have more cats and dogs than you knew what to do with."

"Quite true," responded the stranger, "and even as it is, it is quite a nuisance when a storm comes up."

He was an odd looking fellow with a curly beard, a scimitar in his sash, and a spotted turban on his head. As he finished speaking he began twisting at his ear with his finger as though he were winding a clock.

"What's the matter," asked Omo, "is your ear sore?"

"Certainly not! You know as well as I do I'm only winding myself up so I can start home as soon as the storm passes."

"Oh," cried Omo, "is that it? Well, I don't

have to wind myself up when I want to go anywhere. I'm always wound up."

"You are!" exclaimed the stranger. "Why, I can hardly believe it! I never heard of anyone being that way! You can't have lived here very long."

"Oh, no," said the boy, "I haven't lived here a half hour. I only just came."

Then he asked his companion if this was the city of Ootch, where the famous Fountain of Riches was located.

"Oh, yes," said the stranger, "this is the city of Ootch all right. And the Fountain of Riches is here, too, but it's turned off; been turned off for years. Gee whiz, don't I remember the good old days when it was turned on. Everybody got so rich we nearly starved to death because nobody would work to provide things for us to live on. And then all of a sudden the fountain stopped, and I had to go to work again. I'm a night watchman. Not that there is much use of watching the night, because no one ever tries to steal it, but

that's the trade my father taught me, so I'm it. And now, maybe you'll tell me why you ask about the Fountain of Riches?"

"Well," said Omo, cautiously, "I've heard so much about it I just thought I'd like to see it while I was here." He didn't think it wise to tell anything about the fairy godmother giving him the key to the fountain for fear some one might try to take the key from him.

"Quite so," said the other, "then you'd better come with me. The shower is over now, and if you want to see the fountain you've got to get a permit from the Doodab."

"The Doodab! What's a Doodab?" asked Omo.

"A Doodab," exclaimed the Night Watchman, "is the next swellest person to a Gumshu. Ootch isn't important enough to be governed by a Gumshu so they put a Doodab over us, and he's a right decent chap, and very fond of music. Why I've seen him sit by the hour and push a slate pencil

across a slate and go into ecstasies because it made his blood run cold. You'll probably like him if you don't hate him. So come along and see for yourself."

Now the Doodab of Ootch was a very, very fat, and a very, very lazy gentleman. He hated to be bothered about anything at any time. He wore rings on his fingers and bells on his toes, and he had a big hoop of pearls through the end of his nose. And he especially hated to be bothered when he was singing, which is what he was doing as Omo and the Night Watchman entered his apartment. And this is what he was singing in a very quivery voice as he accompanied himself on a slate with an awfully squeaky slate pencil:

The pie plants they were swaying in the breeze,
And the river it was made of delicious lemonade,
While the doughnuts all were ripe upon the trees.
We wandered hand in hand about the garden
Where the lollipops were strolling to and fro;
And I always will recall that exciting day in Fall
When we stood and watched the pickled onions grow.

"Well," exclaimed the Doodab, fretfully, "what do you want? It seems strange I can't embark on a sea of melody without being dragged ashore like this. What do you want?"

"This boy wants to get a permit to look at the Fountain of Riches," said the Night Watchman.

"He wants—What does he want that for?"

"Oh, I just want to see what it looks like," said Omo. "I never saw a Fountain of Riches before."

"Hum!" said the Doodab of Ootch. "That remark has a very jarring note in it. And what are you going to do after you've seen the Fountain of Riches?"

"Why," said Omo, "just—just look at it, of—of course."

"And what are you going to do after that?"

"Why—why, just—just keep on looking at it, I guess," responded the boy, hardly knowing what to say.

"Nonsense!" said the Doodab, "it won't do any good to keep on looking at it forever. And be-

sides if you look at it too long the permit will run out. It only last three minutes."

"Three minutes!" exclaimed Omo. "Oh, I couldn't turn the fountain on and off, and gather up the gold pieces in three minutes." And then he clapped his hand to his mouth in dismay when he realized what he had said.

"Ah, ha!" said the Doodab of Ootch, rattling the bells on his toes. "So you're going to turn it on, eh?"

"Oh, ho!" said the Night Watchman. "And how in the world did you find out how to turn it on?"

"Oh, I found out!" replied the boy.

"Well," said the Doodab, "I'm mighty glad to hear it, for I'm dreadfully hard up. My purse is just about empty."

Then he clapped his hands and when his servants entered the room, he told them to get several large sacks and some shovels, and follow him. Then having twisted his ear and wound himself up, while

the Night Watchman did the same, he took Omo by one hand and the Night Watchman by the other, and led the way to the Fountain of Riches.

"See here," said Omo, as they hurried through the streets, "you two needn't think you're going to have piles of gold pieces again, for you're not. I'm only going to turn that fountain on long enough to get my hat full; and then I'm going to turn it off."

"What!" shrieked the Doodab of Ootch, "you're going to turn it off before I get my sacks full?"

"Can I believe my ears?" said the Night Watchman. "You can't mean to turn it off before I get my pockets full? Why—why if it hadn't been for me you never would have seen the Doodab, or found out where the fountain was. You must be spoofing!"

"No, I'm not," said Omo. "I'm very sorry, but I promised to turn the fountain off the minute I got my hat full."

"The minute you get your hat full, eh?" said the Doodab, looking at Omo slyly. Then he whispered in the Night Watchman's ear, after which they both laughed merrily.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Omo.

"We're laughing," said the Night Watchman, "to think how you're going to turn the fountain off after you get your hat full."

By this time they had reached the Fountain of Riches which was in the center of the public square of the city.

"Are you still determined to turn it off as soon as you get your hat full?" asked the Night Watchman.

"I have to," said Omo. "I promised."

"Well," said the Doodab, snappishly, "if you want to shut it off you've got to turn it on first, haven't you? So go ahead!"

So Omo took out the silver key, fitted it into the keyhole at the base of the fountain, and turned three times to the right, then three times to the left, and then three times in the middle, and bing—with a clink and a chink, and a tinkle, the fountain of riches began to spout. And the minute it did that,

the Night Watchman grabbed Omo's cap from his head, and the Doodab snatched the key from his hand.

"There," said the Doodab of Ootch, hurling the key as far as he could, "I guess you won't turn off the fountain until you find that key."

"Yes," said the Night Watchman, hurling Omo's cap as far as he could, "and I guess you won't fill your cap until you find your cap either. And by the time you do I'll have my pockets full of gold pieces."

"And," put in the Doodab, "I'll have my sacks full also."

Well, you may be sure Omo was very angry at the trick played on him, and started after the cap and key as quickly as he could. It did not take him long to find his cap, but he simply could not find the key.

"See here," he cried, running back to where the Doodab was tying up the necks of his sacks, which were now filled to bursting, "you've got to help me find that key. I promised to turn this fountain off and I'm going to do it."

"All right," said the Doodab, "I'll help you. I've got gold enough here to last me the rest of my life so I don't care how soon you turn it off."

"Nor I," said the Night Watchman. "I've got all my pockets full, and my stockings full besides, so stop the old thing whenever you want."

But Omo, and the Doodab, and the Night Watchman, although they searched and searched, could not find the key anywhere, and all the while the fountain was spouting gold pieces in a stream a hundred feet high, and so thick it looked like smoke.

"My sakes!" said the Doodab of Ootch, "I don't know how you'll ever stop it! I'm sorry I threw the key away now! But, anyhow, the worst that can happen if the fountain keeps on spouting, is to give the town a spell of nervous prosperity."

But alas, the Doodab of Ootch did not know what he was talking about, for the fountain kept

on spouting and spouting, faster and faster; and presently the streets were knee deep in gold pieces. It was awful.

"Say," said the Night Watchman to Omo, "are you sure you turned the fountain on all right? It never spouted like this before. We've always been able to pick up the gold pieces as fast as they came out."

"Of course I turned it on right," said the boy.
"I turned the key three times to the right and three times to the left, and then *once* in the middle."

"No such thing!" shrieked the Doodab. "No such thing! You turned it three times in the middle! I watched you!"

"Oh," cried Omo, in a horrified tone, "did I? Then—then that's why the gold is coming out so fast. And it's getting deeper all the time."

"It'll soon be up to our necks!" cried the Night Watchman.

"We are lost!" roared the Doodab. He glared at Omo angrily. "How dared you turn it on wrong?"

"Well, what did you throw the key away for?" retorted the boy. "If you hadn't done that, I could turn it off."

And there they stood quarreling, and all the time the gold was getting deeper and deeper about them. And when at last they decided they had better go back to the Doodab's palace before they were buried alive, they found it was too late. The gold pieces were so deep they could not walk.

"Mercy me!" groaned Omo. "I'll never get back to my grandfather now. I wish I had never come here!"

"So do I!" snapped the Doodab of Ootch. "Until you came I was perfectly poor and happy, and now I'm horribly rich and wretched. Oh, what shall we do?"

And then all of a sudden Omo remembered a whistle the fairy godmother had given him when she gave him the key. "If you really need me for anything," she had said, "just blow this whistle; but not unless you really need me." So Omo put the whistle to his lips and blew as hard as he could,

for he thought if he ever *really* needed a fairy godmother he needed one now.

And the minute he blew the whistle there was a flutter and a whirr, and the fairy godmother, frilled bonnet and all, stood before them.

"Well," she said, "you are in a nice mess, aren't you?"

"It isn't my fault," said the boy. And then he told her how he had tried to obey her instructions, but could not because the Doodab of Ootch had thrown the key away. "I did make a mistake turning the fountain on," he said, "but I could have turned it off all right if the key had not been taken from me."

"I see!" said the fairy godmother.

Then she told Omo to fill his cap as well as his pockets with gold pieces. And after he had done it, she gave three clucks like a chicken does, snapped her finger twice; and bing—all the gold pieces in the streets of Ootch, all the gold in the Doodab's money bags, all the gold in the pockets and stockings of the Night Watchman; all the gold

everywhere except that which Omo had, disappeared, and the Fountain of Riches also.

"There," she said, "that's the best way to settle the matter. And now, come on, Omo, and get the doctor for your grandfather and pay the Ogre his rent."

"But," howled the Doodab of Ootch and the Night Watchman, "what do we do? We haven't a cent!"

"You don't deserve any," replied the fairy godmother, sternly. "And as long as you're howling so about it, I'll just make you and the whole city disappear as well."

And she did, with three clucks and a snap of her fingers; and the next moment Omo found himself in the fairy godmother's cottage.

Well, you can easily guess how after thanking his benefactress for what she had done, he hurried off to the doctor's office. And when the doctor saw Omo's cap and pockets full of gold, he went with him at once; and became so interested in Omo's grandfather's case he took ten years to cure him.

But neither Omo nor his grandfather cared if he did, for they had plenty of money. And when the ogre came stamping in to collect his rent, thinking he would not get it and would then make Omo into a dumpling, Omo just laughed and bought the place from him. And not only that, but he added another wing to the cottage and laid out a pretty garden as well, as much like the fairy godmother's as he could make it. And when he did that the fairy godmother was so pleased she came and kept house for them.

And now if you want to see a really happy family, just stop and make a visit at Omo's place in the middle of the forest where his grandfather used to cut down the trees to make a living, but which he does not have to do any more, thanks to the Fountain of Riches.

## OBSTINATE TOWN

Of course you know what a postage stamp is: a little, square, gummed stamp with a picture of George Washington on it. But a magic postage stamp is a very different stamp indeed. The George Washington kind you can buy in the drug stores, but the other sort you cannot buy. They are given to you free of charge, if you don't look out.

In the autumn, when the leaves are falling, the Poppykoks come to town. There may be a hundred leaves falling and not one leaf have a Poppykok on it, and then all of a sudden, another leaf falls on your shoulder and a Poppykok is sitting on it, and then—bing—the moment he lands on your shoulder he jumps off the leaf and pastes a magic postage stamp on your cheek, and then—off you start for Obstinate Town by special delivery, that is, you do if you happen to be a boy that al-

ways wants his own way. But if you are not that kind of a boy, you need not worry.

However, the boy this story is about was one of the kind who wanted his own way. No matter what he was told to do he wanted to do something else. Otherwise, he was a very nice little chap, and his name was Prince Zep, the only son of a wealthy and powerful king. Of course being a prince he was allowed to have his own way much more than was good for him, and was so used to it, he never thought anything about how unpleasant it might make things for other people.

And so, it is not surprising that one afternoon late in the Fall he was caught, and sent off to Obstinate Town by special delivery.

Now Zep never guessed, any more than you have, that there was such a place as Obstinate Town, or such things as Poppykoks or magic postage stamps. And so, as he strolled through the Royal Park that afternoon scudding his feet through the dried leaves that covered the way, he had not the slightest idea that anything was going



The Poppykok pasted a magic postage stamp on his cheek

to happen to him, until quite unexpectedly, a big, red maple leaf fell on his shoulder, and from it stepped a Poppykok in his bright scarlet coat and breeches, and with his magic postage stamp neatly curled up in a roll in his hand. And before Zep could even gasp, the Poppykok had pasted the stamp on his cheek, leaped from his shoulder to the ground, and stood before him, smiling cheerfully.

"There you are," said the Poppykok, "a good job, well done. Bon voyage!"

"Bon what?" began Zep, "I-I-"

"That's all right," responded the Poppykok, "you don't know where you're going, but you're going. Good-by! I'll see you later!"

And then Zep felt himself leap into the air and start off with a whiz. And the more he whizzed, the more he whizzed, until it seemed as though he would never stop whizzing.

"My gracious," he thought, as well as he could as he hurried along, "what on earth has happened to me, and where, oh where, am I going? This is really dreadful!" And indeed it was for a little while. But presently he began to get used to the whizzing, and finally found himself descending in a graceful curve before a large and ornate building that looked very much like a palace. And sure enough that is exactly what it was, and sitting on the steps of the palace waiting for him was the very same Poppykok that had started him off on his journey.

"Welcome!" said the Poppykok, rising and coming forward as the Prince reached the ground with a bump, "you're right on time. I hope you had a pleasant trip?"

"No," said Zep, crossly, "I certainly did not. I had a horrid trip. How dare you treat me this way?"

"Pooh! Pooh!" responded the other, snapping his fingers, "everybody says that when they first arrive. You'll be crazy about the place in a little while. And now let's go inside and report to the Emperor."

Pushing open the front door of the palace the Poppykok led the way into the grand entrance hall,

and as he did so a short, fat man with a crown on his bald head, and bristling whiskers all about his face, came tumbling down the stairway head over heels, and landed in a heap at their feet.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed, sitting up and rubbing his nose. After which he rubbed his shins and said "ouch" once more; and "oh my" and "good gracious." And after that he bawled up the stairs as loud as he could: "Don't try to tell me to be careful and not fall downstairs, for I'll do as I want."

Then he swung himself about. "The idea," he said, glaring at the Prince and the Poppykok, "of any one trying to keep *me* from falling downstairs. Huh! Can't I fall down my own stairs? Can't I? Tell me!"

"Certainly you can, your majesty," responded the Poppykok. "You can fall up 'em, too, if you want."

"I should think so," retorted the Emperor, "and yet the Queen tells me to look out and not fall down 'em, because it worries her. Well, let her worry. I want her to worry."

But if the Queen was worried she did not act that way, for as she came tripping down she was laughing so heartily that she nearly fell herself, and finally had to sit on the bottom step to get her breath.

"What—what—" spluttered the Emperor, "what do you mean by not worrying? You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Look at my nose, to say nothing of the bump on my shins. My, oh, my, isn't anybody worried about me?"

"I am, your majesty," put in Zep, "and I think the Queen ought to be, too."

"She ought not," snapped the monarch, scrambling to his feet. "If I wanted her to be glad she would be worried, but as I want her to be worried, she is not. You must be a stranger here."

"He is," said the Poppykok. "He just arrived. I only caught him a little while ago."

Then he told the Emperor who Zep was. "This boy," he said, "is a Prince, and has his own way more than anybody else in his father's kingdom. In fact, he is one of the most delightfully stubborn

young persons I have ever met, and never will do what any one wants him to if he can possibly help it."

"My," said the Emperor, grasping Zep's hand and shaking it warmly, "if that isn't the finest record I ever heard of. I couldn't be more pig-headed myself. How did you get so? Did you learn it at school or just teach yourself?"

"Oh," said Zep, feeling rather proud "I iust picked it up, I guess."

"Well," said the monarch, "there is nothing like it to my mind. "Perhaps you've read my famous poem on the subject? Have you?"

"No," said Zep, "I never heard of it."

"Humph!" said the Emperor, looking rather disappointed. "You're not very literary, are you? However, there is no reason why you should not hear it now. Listen."

When I was a lad, I said to myself
As I hooked the jam from the pantry shelf,
"I may grow up and I may grow old
"But I hope I'll never do as I'm told.

"For all the fun I've ever had, "Has always come from being bad."

So I started out on my wild career,
And I did so well that I'm Emperor here,
Where you're told to do this, and you simply
don't—

And you're asked to do that, and you say you won't.

And my what a lot of fun I've had— For I never mind, and I'm awful bad.

"You can see," said the Emperor, when he had finished, "what a splendid place you have come to. And as the years pass, I hope you may find it even more delightful."

"As the years pass," repeated Zep. "Why—why, I can't stay here for years. What would my folks say?"

"If you ask me," put in the Poppykok, "I should say they'd say: 'thank goodness, he's gone at last.'"

"Yes," said the Emperor, "it's only in Obstinate Town that people like boys like you. Everywhere else they think you're a nuisance. Didn't you know that?"

"Why—why, no," said Zep. "I—I thought everybody liked me."

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared the Poppykok, shaking with merriment.

"Hee, hee, hee!" cackled the Emperor, "my word, that's good! You ought to send that to a comic paper. He thought everybody liked him."

"Well," said Zep, sulkily, "they always acted as though they did. I—I like people to like me. But as long as they don't I'll *never* go back."

"That's the stuff," said the Emperor. "Don't you do it. You stay here with me and enjoy yourself. Do as you please. Be as cranky as you like. Why, I wouldn't be surprised if you'd be a popular idol some day if you go on the way you've begun."

So Zep settled down in Obstinate Town determined to enjoy himself with all his might. And because he was a prince, the Emperor let him live in the palace and eat his meals at the royal table.

However, he did not care much for the meals. You never could get what you wanted. When you asked the royal butler for cold chicken, he would always tell you he would rather you took cold ham. And if you wanted stewed kidneys, the butler right away said he preferred to give you broiled oysters. No matter what you asked for, the stubborn old butler always insisted on giving you something else, whether you liked it or not. And such an arrangement made Zep awfully cross.

"I don't see why you have such a butler," he said to the Emperor. "When I ask our butler at home for anything, he gives it to me quick. He wouldn't *dare* give me anything else. If he did my father would hang him."

"Humph!" responded the Emperor, "it seems to me your father must be a very cruel person. The idea of hanging any one for wanting his own way."

"But," said Zep, "it's so—so inconvenient. If they have their own way how can you have yours?"

"Well," said the Emperor, "you can't, with a butler, unless you go to the pantry and help yourself. And yet, why shouldn't he have his way as well as you? Why shouldn't he?"

And the Prince did not know what to say to that. But nevertheless it was tough to have every one else having their own way as well as you. When you got in a trolley car and told the conductor to let you off at a certain street, he would stop the car at another street, and unless you were stronger than he, would put you off there no matter how much you struggled and yelled. And one day, when the Emperor and Zep were put off six blocks from their destination, the monarch was dreadfully angry.

"I know I told you I thought other people ought to have their own way the same as you and I," he said to Zep, "but when a conductor not only puts me off his car before I want to get off, but kicks me into the bargain, it's too much."

"That's what I think," said Zep, "and if I were you I'd issue a royal decree saying that only the upper classes can have their own way *always*, and that the lower classes can only have their own way, when it suits the upper classes."

"A good idea," said the Emperor, "I'll do it."

And despite the fact that it made the lower classes fairly purple with indignation, the decree was issued at once, and Zep, and the Emperor, and the rest of the upper classes, did as they liked whenever they wanted to, and had a fine time doing it.

"I tell you what," said the Emperor to the Prince one morning after breakfast as he finished reading the paper, "that was a grand idea of yours, Zep, about letting the lower classes have their own way only when it suited us. Life has been much sweeter ever since."

"I think so, too," said Zep, "except that if nobody else could have their own way, it would be sweeter still."

"Hum," said the monarch, "I never thought of that. And the more I think of it, the more I think you're right. I know what I'll do. I'll issue another decree putting all the upper classes into the lower classes, except myself. Then I can do whatever I want, no matter what anybody says."

"But," said Zep, "you wouldn't put me in the lower classes, would you?"

"Why not," replied the Emperor. "Suppose I wanted my own way about something at the same time that you wanted your own way about it, the only way it could be managed without a fight, would be for you to be in the lower classes where you couldn't have your own way unless it suited me. See?"

"Yes," said Zep, sulkily, "I see, but I don't think it's fair. Why not put yourself in the lower classes and let me stay in the upper class?"

"Impossible," said the Emperor, "for if any one ever belonged to the upper classes an Emperor does."

"So does a prince," said Zep.

"Not necessarily," replied the monarch. "I had a dog named Prince once, but you never heard of a dog named Emperor, did you?"

And as Zep could think of nothing to say to that, the Emperor issued his decree, and Zep and all the rest of the upper classes were put in the lower classes, and the monarch enjoyed himself more than ever. But if the Emperor enjoyed himself, Zep and the rest of the upper classes did not. For if they wanted to do something the Emperor always wanted them to do something different. And if he did not want that, he wanted them to do something nobody could do. And as Zep lived in the palace he had it worse than anybody else.

He was told to hold his breath for an hour; to stand on his ear for half an hour, and not wink for fifteen minutes. And when he did not do what he was told because he could not, the Emperor stuck pins in him and dared him to yell.

"See here," said Zep to the monarch, "I used to like you but I don't a bit any more. I'm going back home right off."

"Very well," said the Emperor, "go ahead. I'm tired of you anyway. The idea of a strong, healthy boy not being able to stand on his ear, and making such a fuss, too, because a few pins are stuck in him. Go on, go back home."

"But," said Zep, "how will I get there? I—I don't know the way."

"Of course you don't," replied the monarch, "nobody does. There isn't any way."

"Isn't any way?" repeated the Prince in a tone of horror. "Why—why, have I got to stay here with you always?"

The Emperor nodded. "Sure thing, unless a Kokkipop sends you back. The Poppykoks bring you here and the Kokkipops send you back. But as no one ever wants to go back it's mighty hard to find a Kokkipop, so I guess I'll be sticking pins in you for some time yet. Ho, ho, ho!"

Well, you can be sure when the Emperor said that and laughed about it, too, Zep felt about as gloomy as he ever had in his life.

"Oh, dear," he said, "what on earth shall I do? If only I can get away from this nasty old place I'll never want my own way again. I'll be a different boy. I never—"

"Here, here," put in the Emperor, sternly, "stop that talk. You mustn't say such things as that. No one ever talks about not wanting their own way in Obstinate Town. It's downright treason. Do you want to go to prison? But anyhow, I don't suppose you meant it."

"Indeed, I did," said Zep, "I meant every word I said. I'm tired of having my own way—it's silly. Look at the mess it's got me into. I'm going to be different—"

"Stop!" shrieked the Emperor, at the top of his lungs, "stop, I say! You'll have a Kokkipop here in another moment, and oh, how I hate 'em. I hate 'em worse than—than spiders. And—and, my goodness gracious sakes alive, you've brought one—you've brought one. Run, run, or the Kokkipop will get you!"

And with that the Emperor dived under his throne, while the Prince, looking about with a startled air, did not know whether to flee or not. And then, as he hesitated, a very brisk old gentleman, dressed in bright yellow, came into the room.

"Did you call?" he asked Zep.

"Call," said the boy, "why—why, no. What do you mean?"

"Did you call for a Kokkipop?" repeated the

other testily. "And for mercy's sake don't say you didn't, for I've been waiting for a call all my life. I was a young man when I joined the Kokkipops, and in all that time I have never been called until now. So I hope you did call. Did you?"

"Well," said Zep, "I said I wanted to go home, if that's what you mean."

"And you said you didn't want your own way any more, didn't you?" inquired the Kokkipop, eagerly.

"Yes," replied the Prince, "I did. And I don't."

"He does, too," put in the Emperor, sticking his head out from under his throne. "He doesn't mean what he says. He's just mad at me for sticking pins in him."

"I don't believe it," said the Kokkipop, scowling at the Emperor, "you're just trying to keep me out of a job." Then he turned to the Prince. "You did mean what you said, didn't you?"

"I certainly did," said Zep, "and-"

"Whoopee!" yelled the Kokkipop, joyfully, "then I have got a job at last."

Whereupon he took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and began to paste magic postage stamps all over the Prince. "There," he said, standing off to admire his work, "I guess that will take you back all right."

"Take him back," sneered the Emperor, crawling from under his throne, "why it'll take him twice over. You've put excess postage on him. Shows what a Kokkipop knows about his business.

"Is that so," retorted the Kokkipop, "well, I know enough to send this boy where you won't stick pins in him any more, and where he won't want his own way any more." He turned to Zep. "Isn't that so?"

"Yes, indeed," said the Prince.

"Then," responded the Kokkipop, "here's to a quick and comfortable trip. Good-by, I'll see you later."

"No-wait!" shouted the Emperor, running to-

vard Zep, "don't go. I'll put you in the upper classes again. I'll—"

But it was no use. Once again Zep felt himself leap into the air, and whiz, and whiz, and whiz, even faster than he had before. And then just as he was beginning to get used to the whizzing and rather enjoy it, he commenced to descend in a graceful curve, and presently landed with a bump in the gardens adjoining his father's palace. And there, sitting on the grass, was the Kokkipop waiting for him.

"Greeting," said the Kokkipop, "did you have a nice trip?"

"Fine," said Zep, "but of course I'm glad it's over and that I'm safe home again. And of course I'm awfully obliged to you for getting me out of such a scrape."

"Oh, that's all right," said the Kokkipop, as he peeled off the magic postage stamps, "it's been a pleasure to help you. And who knows but you may try to have your own way again and be taken

back to Obstinate Town. And if you do, don't forget I'm always glad to get a job."

"All right," said Zep, "I won't, but I never expect to visit Obstinate Town again if I can help it."

And sure enough Zep never did. From that moment he was a changed boy, so much so that it really worried his father, the king.

"I don't understand it," said the King to his Prime Minister. "He does just what I tell him and never whines; and when he takes a walk he jumps about a foot if a leaf falls on him. I don't understand it."

But if the king did not, Zep did, and was determined no Poppykok should get another chance at him.

## TOOBAD THE TAILOR

Once there lived in the city of Vex a tailor named Toobad, which was a very good name for him, for he really was too bad for anything, in fact, he was downright wicked. And not only was he wicked but he was also deceitful, because he was really not a tailor at all but an enchanter or conjuror, and only practiced a tailor's trade to fool the fathers, and grandfathers, and uncles, and big brothers of the little boys of Vex, and make them pay him money. And this the way he did it:

He put a sign in his window and offered to make clothes for gentlemen very, very cheap out of the very, very best materials that would never wear out, and of course when he offered to do that all the fathers, and grandfathers, and uncles, and big brothers went and ordered their suits from him as quick as they could. But after the clothes were made and the fathers, and grandfathers, and

uncles, and big brothers had put them on, then they found out, when it was too late, what sort of a person Toobad was, for they had to keep on paying, and paying, and paying for the clothes forever and forever. If they did not the suits they were wearing got tighter and tighter until their breath was almost squeezed out of them.

It was no use to try to get the clothes off because they simply would *not* come off. So you can imagine how cross and miserable all the fathers, and grandfathers, and uncles, and big brothers in Vex were.

Now there were lots of little boys in Vex, but the most interesting one was a bright little fellow named Winn, because in his family there happened to be a father, and a grandfather, and an uncle, and a big brother all wearing suits made by Toobad the Tailor, whereas the other boys only had a father, or a grandfather, or an uncle, or a big brother. None of them had all four together, and therefore did not have as much cause to dislike Toobad as Winn had.

Of course when Winn's father, and grandfather, and his uncle and his big brother, had paid for their suits once and Toobad had told them they must keep right on paying every week, they said they would not. But after the suits had squeezed them once or twice, and after they had tried to get the clothes off and found they could not, they changed their minds. And every Saturday night as soon as they got their salaries they rushed right down to Toobad's shop and paid him, so they would have a comfortable Sunday, which did not please Winn's mother at all because it left very little to buy food with.

"Good gracious," she used to say to Winn's father, and grandfather, and uncle, and big brother, "if you keep on giving that tailor half your money, I don't know how I'll get along."

"Indeed," said Winn's father, who was very fat, "and if I don't pay it I don't know how I'll get along. I've got to breathe, haven't I?"

"Yes," said Winn's grandfather, and his uncle, and his big brother, who were all as fat as his father, "we would much rather breathe than eat."

"All right, then," said Winn's mother, "go ahead and breathe but don't blame me if you starve also, for food is so high, I can buy very little with the money you give me."

And when she said that Winn's father, and his grandfather, and his uncle, and his big brother would groan awfully, which made Winn and his mother as blue as indigo, for they knew if Toobad was not paid, the clothes Winn's father, and grandfather, and uncle and big brother wore would squeeze them tighter and tighter so they could not work at all, and yet if he was paid there would not be enough money left to keep the wolf from the door.

So finally Winn determined to go and see Too-bad and try and coax him not to be so hard on his folks. "Maybe if I offer to be his errand boy," he said, "he'll agree to let us stop paying for a while until we catch up with our grocery bills."

But when he got to the tailor's shop he had a very hard time to coax Toobad into having an errand boy. "No, no," said the enchanter, testily, "I don't need an errand boy, and even if I did need one I need the money your family pays me much more."

"But think how stylish it is for a tailor to have an errand boy," said Winn. "All fashionable tailors send clothes home to their customers. They never ask customers to come after their clothes. I should think you'd be ashamed not to have an errand boy."

So, finally, after talking and talking, Toobad agreed to hire Winn as his errand boy, and instead of giving him wages to let his family stop paying for their clothes for a few weeks.

"But remember this," said the tailor, "you are not to tell any one about the arrangement, because if you do all my customers will want to stop paying until they get caught up on their grocery bills."

So Winn promised to keep the matter secret and the next morning started in on his duties.

Now it happened that one of the first persons he delivered clothes to was a second cousin of his mother's aunt. This second cousin had not heard of the trouble in Winn's family because Winn's father, and grandfather, and uncle, and big brother had been afraid to tell any one what Toobad had done to them for fear their clothes would squeeze them worse than ever. So when Winn delivered his mother's aunt's second cousin's clothes he did not know whether to warn him about putting them on or not. And while he was trying to make up his mind about it, his mother's aunt's second cousin went into another room to get the money to pay for the clothes, and when he came out he had the clothes on.

"Gee whiz," he said proudly, "don't they fit me grand?"

"Maybe they do," said Winn, "but I was just going to tell you not to put them on, because now you can't get them off, and you've got to keep on paying for them forever and forever."

"What!" yelled his mother's aunt's second cousin.

And then with another yell he began tearing at

the clothes with all his might, trying to get them off, but of course it was no use for although he almost turned himself inside out, they stuck to him like sticking plaster.

"You're a nice one!" he shouted, shaking his finger under Winn's nose. "You ought to be arrested. How dared you sit there and let me put these awful things on? I just hope your father, and your grandfather, and your uncle, and your big brother get stuck the same way. I certainly do!"

"They are stuck," said Winn. "They ve been stuck for some time. That is why I am working for Toobad. And I'm very sorry I did not warn you about the clothes in time."

And then he told his mother's aunt's second cousin what a fix his folks were in and how if you did not pay for the clothes every week they squeezed you until you did.

"Sakes alive!" groaned his mother's aunt's second cousin, "isn't it dreadful the trouble some people have? Here I am all dressed up fine but I



He began tearing at his clothes with all his might

can't enjoy it a bit after what you've told me."

Then he escorted Winn to the door and said he never wanted to see his face again. "I'm sorry to have to say it," he continued, "but until you came a little while ago my life was full of sunshine and now it is nothing but a mud puddle. But I forgive you. Good-by!"

Well, you may be sure Winn felt terribly gloomy as he went back to Toobad's shop. When he hired out as the tailor's errand boy in order to help his family, he had not thought how he would be bringing distress into other families by delivering Toobad's enchanted clothes. But he could see now, after the scene with his mother's aunt's second cousin, how selfish and wicked it was for him to help Toobad get other people into trouble in order to make things easier for his own folks. So he determined that he would give up his job right away.

"I've decided not to be your errand boy any longer," he said to the enchanter, as he handed him the money he had received from his mother's aunt's second cousin. "I find you are too wicked to work for."

"Humph!" said the tailor, "and why am I any wickeder now than I was this morning? You were glad to work for me then."

"I know," said Winn, "but I have just seen my mother's aunt's second cousin turn from a carefree, happy person into a miserable wretch, and all because I delivered him one of your enchanted suits of clothes. And I cannot help you in your crimes any longer even if my family do suffer. Good afternoon!"

"Good afternoon nothing!" shouted Toobad. "Come back here at once. Yesterday when I did not want an errand boy you talked me into having one, and now that I've gotten used to having one you want me to do without one. Well, I shan't do it. You'll work for me whether you want to or not."

And with that he stretched out his hand toward Winn and then drew it back and when he drew it back something mysterious drew Winn back also,

and though he tried to get to the door he could not move.

"Now," said Toobad, "will you work for me or not?"

"No," said Winn, firmly, "I will never work for you if I can help it."

"Very well, then," said the enchanter, "you shall work for me because you cannot help it."

And with that he repeated the alphabet backward like lightning, wiggling his fingers at the same time, and in a flash Winn was transformed into a tailor's dummy, after which Toobad placed him on the sidewalk outside his shop with one of the enchanted suits on him and with a sign on his breast which read:

## TAKE ME HOME FOR \$3.75

so people could see what fine, cheap clothes were sold inside.

And maybe Winn did not feel bad as he stood there day after day not even able to roll his eyes or move or speak. And on Saturday night he felt particularly bad because his father, and his grandfather, and his uncle, and his big brother came by the shop arm in arm, all whistling merrily because they did not have to pay Toobad any money that week and were going to a movie instead.

"My, my!" they exclaimed, when they saw Winn by the door, "doesn't that image look exactly like our Winn, but of course it cannot be because it's made of wax." And then the next moment they went on their way as happy as larks.

"Oh, dear!" said Winn to himself, miserably, "whatever am I going to do? How am I ever going to escape from this terrible tailor? If only I could think of *some* way."

And later when Toobad had brought him indoors and shut the shop, and gone off to bed and left him standing in a dark corner, he thought and thought with all his might, for he felt if he did not find *some* way to break the enchantment he might as well die.

And then as he was still puzzling over the problem he heard a stealthy step, and into the room came Toobad in his nightgown, holding a lighted candle in his hand, and Winn saw that he was walking in his sleep. And not only was he walking in his sleep but he was talking in his sleep also, and this is what he was saying:

Of all the gents who wear my clothes
Not one has ever guessed, sir,
That he could break the magic spell
By pulling down his vest, sir.
Oh, yes, indeed, there is no need
Why he should be distressed, sir,
If he but knows enchanted clothes
Are governed by the vest, sir.

And when Winn heard what he was saying he knew right away that if he could only escape he could easily get his father, and grandfather, and uncle, and big brother out of the power of Toobad the tailor, for he only had to tell them to pull down their vests and they would be rid forever of the hateful clothing they were wearing. But alas, it was one thing to want to get home, and another to get there, for while he was transformed into a

tailor's dummy he was utterly helpless and could only stand and watch Toobad as he wandered about the shop with his eyes shut and the lighted candle in his hand.

And then all of a sudden something happened that transformed him from a tailor's dummy into a very real boy, for Toobad, not seeing where he was going, bumped right into him and the flame of the candle came right against Winn's nose—only for a moment—but it was long enough to scorch it and to make Winn yell—ouch! at the top of his lungs, and to joggle all the enchantment out of him. And if you did not believe an enchanted person can be cured by scorching his nose, just get yourself enchanted and scorch your nose and see if it does not work.

Anyway, it cured Winn, and not only that but it woke Toobad up. And when the tailor found himself in his shop with his nightgown on, and found Winn changed from a dummy into a regular boy again, he was furious.

"Zounds!" he shrieked, dancing up and down, "how the—what the—where did I come from and how did you get all right again?"

And when Winn told him he was more furious than ever. "Well," he said, "I'll soon fix you anyway." And thereupon he began to say the alphabet backward the same as he had done before, but by the time he had said three letters and before the enchantment had had time to work, Winn rushed at him and knocked the candle to the floor. And then while the shop was in darkness he unhooked the door and ran home as fast as he could. When he got there it was past midnight and of course every one was asleep, but by and by his mother heard him knocking and let him in.

And you may be sure it did not take his father, or his grandfather, or his uncle, or his big brother long to hop out of bed where they had been sleeping with their clothes on because they could not get them off. And maybe they were not surprised when they learned that Winn had really been the tailor's dummy they had seen outside the shop.

And maybe they were not delighted when they found that Winn knew of a way for them to get rid of the enchanted clothes. And maybe they did not pull down their vests in a hurry as soon as Winn had finished telling them about it.

"My gracious," said Winn's grandfather, as he peeled the last of the hated garments from him, "I feel twenty years younger. And I can hardly wait until morning to get my hands on that villainous tailor."

"Nor I," said Winn's father.

"Me, too," said Winn's uncle.

"I daren't tell you what I'll do to him," said Winn's big brother.

And the first thing after breakfast they all went around to Toobad's shop dressed in their old clothes, and each one of them kept his word so well that Toobad was laid up in the hospital for a week. And every time he got well and came out again a fresh batch of victims was waiting to send him back again, for Winn had gone all about the city telling everybody who had bought the en-

chanted clothes, how to pull down their vests and get rid of them. And, of course, one of the first persons he told after his immediate family was his mother's aunt's second cousin. But as his mother's aunt's second cousin had forgotten to put on his vest when he donned his enchanted suit, he could not pull his vest down. And so the only thing to do was to give him chloroform and skin the clothes off him a little strip at a time. After which they sent him to the hospital also, where he lay in bed right alongside of Toobad the tailor.

And perhaps that is the reason Toobad is still in the hospital, for after Winn's mother's aunt's second cousin got well, he refused to go home, but sat down on the hospital steps to wait for Toobad. And neither Winn's father, nor his grandfather, nor his uncle. nor his big brother, were able to coax him away.

But as for Winn, he did not try to coax him, indeed he soon forgot all about his mother's aunt's second cousin, for all the persons in Vex who had been wearing Toobad's enchanted clothes, began sending Winn presents to show their gratitude, and when you have sixteen gold watches, and a couple of ponies, and skates, and air guns, and pretty much every sort of a thing that a boy likes, you cannot think of much else.

The best you can do is just to enjoy yourself, and if you think Winn is not doing that, take a trip to Vex some day and you will soon find out.

## THE SNOOPING-BUG

Once there was a Snooping Bug that lived in a glass jar on a shelf in the cottage of a Fairy Godmother. Now fairy godmothers are always nice, but this Fairy Godmother was very nice, and the reason she kept the Snooping Bug a prisoner in a jar on her shelf was because she was afraid he would go about and get folks into trouble. And another thing that showed she was unusually nice was that every week-end she always invited a little prince or princess to be her guest. And this story opens just as Prince Pranc, the only son of the king of a nearby city, had arrived to spend several days with his Fairy Godmother.

"Now, Pranc," said the Fairy Godmother, "I want you to have the happiest kind of a time, and you'll have it without doubt if you don't get into mischief."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the Prince, as he watched the Fairy Godmother unpack his trunk, "if I get into mischief you just send me home again."

"Yes," said the Fairy Godmother, "but suppose you are not here to send home again; suppose you have disappeared. Don't forget this is an enchanted house and that strange things can happen in an enchanted house."

"Phew!" said Pranc, "I almost wish I hadn't come."

"Not at all," replied the Fairy Godmother, "there is nothing to be alarmed about. You could sit on a keg of gunpowder and be perfectly safe if you didn't explode the powder. But in case you should get into trouble, put this ring on your finger and turn it around and around when danger threatens."

"Oh, thank you," said the Prince, slipping on the ring. "I don't feel so worried now."

Then the Fairy Godmother took him all over the cottage and showed him the wonderful belongings

she had, and last of all she took him into her study and there Pranc saw the Snooping Bug in his jar on the shelf.

"What's that?" he asked.

And the Fairy Godmother told him it was a Snooping Bug. "And this one," she continued, pointing to another jar on the shelf, "has a Sulking Bug in it; and this one—next to it, is a Crying Bug. If they got out of the jars they'd bite you, and you'd start in to snoop, or sulk, or cry."

"Whoever heard of such a thing," said the Prince. "It can't be."

"It can't, eh," said the Fairy Godmother. "Just put your finger on the top of this bottle when I take the cork out."

And with that she took the magic stopper out of the Crying Bug bottle and Pranc stuck his finger in. And then—ping—the next moment something bit it, and the *next* moment he burst out crying, boo-hoo—boo-hoo, as loud as he could. And as he was a boy who hardly *ever* cried, he felt awfully ashamed of himself.

"Oh, dear," he sobbed, "I hate to cry this way, but—but—"

"Don't worry," said the Fairy Godmother, as she corked the bottle again, "he only gave you a little bite. You'll be over it in a minute."

And presently the tears stopped rolling down Pranc's cheeks and he was all right once more.

"My goodness," he said, as he wiped his eyes, "I wouldn't like that to happen again."

"Then," said the Fairy Godmother, "see that you keep hands off these bottles. As long as the bugs stay in the bottles everything will be all right, but if they once get out they'll bite every girl and boy they find. That is why I keep them prisoners. I don't care for snooping, sulking or crying children, nor does any one else."

Then she told Pranc that she would have to leave him for awhile. "I have been invited to the christening of a princess," she said.

So she put on her gossamer cloak and her diamond studded bonnet, kissed her hand to Pranc and went off to the christening. But so interested

was Pranc in the bugs on the shelf he hardly noticed her going, for the Sulking Bug looked so mad it almost startled him, and the Crying Bug had cried so much his bottle was half full of tears and he looked almost as mad as the Sulking Bug. But when it came to the Snooping Bug, it was a very different affair altogether, for the Snooping Bug, although he had a sly sort of expression in his big, pop eyes, was real jolly looking as he slowly scratched his shoulder blade with his hind leg. And when he saw the Prince looking at him, he winked one eye and then turned a couple of somersaults, which made the Prince laugh like anything.

"Gee whiz," he exclaimed, "I like this bug."

And in order to get a better look at the creature he reached the jar down from the shelf and carried it over to the window, or at least he started to, but before he got there he stumbled—bing—the jar slipped from his hands, fell to the floor with a crash and broke into a thousand pieces, leaving the Snooping Bug kicking in the midst of the fragments.



The jar broke into a thousand pieces

"Oh," cried the Prince, "I must get something to put him in or he'll get away."

"Nonsense," remarked the Snooping Bug.
"I'm not going away. You couldn't drive me away. I'm going to stay with you. But do get me out of this mess, please."

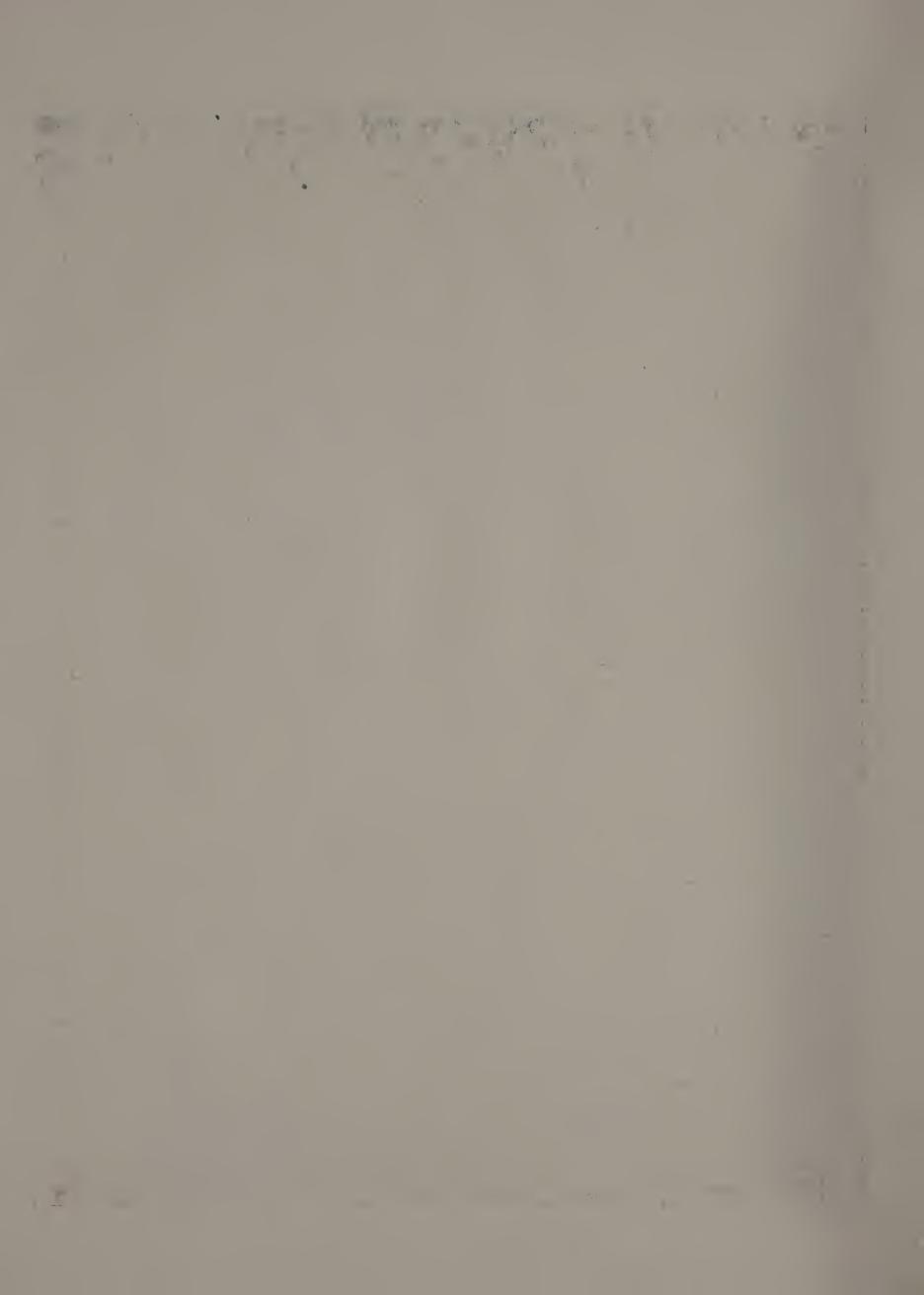
So Pranc, not suspecting anything, stooped to pick the Snooping Bug up and then as he did so—zip, the Bug bit his finger and in about eight seconds he changed from a first class little boy who always minded his own business and did not pry into things, into a sly, snooping fellow peering into corners, and closets, and everything. And as he changed, the Snooping Bug changed also. It swelled, and swelled, and swelled until it was half as big as Pranc. After which it chuckled, wiggling the two long, wavy horns that grew over its eyebrows, and took the Prince by the hand.

"Come on," it said, "let's start. My, but it feels good to get out of that jar."

"Start," said Pranc, "start where?"



Floo the wizard at work.



"Why, to headquarters," replied the Snooping Bug, "where you can snoop all you want."

So off they went to the Fairy Godmother's preserve closet. "Open the door," said the Snooping Bug. And when the Prince had done so the Snooping Bug pushed Pranc inside and then followed, shutting the door after him.

"My, but it's dark," exclaimed the Prince. "What are we going to do now?"

"Just you wait," said the Snooping Bug. Then he called out: "Going down!" And all of a sudden a brilliantly lighted elevator came down right in front of them, the door slid open, Pranc and the Snooping Bug stepped inside, and then, ker-zip, ker-zip, ker-zip, the elevator began to drop, and drop, and drop, with the most awful dips.

Goodness, how they did drop. The Prince thought they must have dropped about nine hundred miles when at last the elevator stopped after giving a terrible bounce or two, and the Snooping Bug shouted: "Here we are!"

Pranc wondered where "here we are" was as he looked up and down the street in which he presently found himself standing, and was about to ask the Snooping Bug, when all of a sudden somebody bumped into him and he turned to see a tall, slim fellow in a pink uniform with his hands full of letters which he had been reading as he walked along. Over one shoulder hung a leather bag which was crammed with other letters still in their envelopes, and on his head was a cap with a tassel and on the front of the cap it said "postman."

"What do you mean," cried the stranger, sternly, "by interfering with the mails? Can't you see I'm on government duty?"

"Oh, excuse me," said Pranc, "I didn't mean to bump you, and I wouldn't have done it if you hadn't been reading those letters as you walked along."

"Indeed," said the postman, "well if I didn't read some of the letters as I walked about delivering them I don't know what I would do. I can't read all of 'em at night, you know."

"But," said the Prince, "they are not your letters, are they?"

"Of course not," said the postman, testily, "who would write me all this lot of letters? They belong to the different citizens of Snoopania."

"Oh," said the Prince, "you don't read other people's letters, I hope."

"Well," retorted the postman, opening his eyes very wide, "I should hope I did. If I didn't I'd lose my job. Every letter must be torn open and read, and every postal card must not only be read but committed to memory. I could shut my eyes right now and tell you what I've read on a million postal cards only I haven't the time. This is the way of it, you see:

A postman's life is a busy one,
His working hours are never done,
For all of the letters the public writes
He has to read at home at nights;
And all of the postals, yes, sir-ee,
He has to commit to memoree.
And so if you think I'm cross a bit
You'll know my job is the cause of it.

As he finished he suddenly noticed the Snooping Bug. "For mercy's sake," he exclaimed, "when did you get back? I thought the Fairy Godmother had you bottled up."

"She did," said the Snooping Bug, "but thanks to this noble boy I'm out again. Where can I find the First Lord of the Keyhole? I want to make arrangements for parliament to reward my rescuer."

"Well," said the postman, "I think he's at his office right now, if you hurry."

So, after bidding the postman good-by, the Snooping Bug hurried Pranc off to the office of the First Lord of the Keyhole.

Soon they reached Parliament House where the First Lord of the Keyhole had his office, but when they tried to open the office door it seemed to stick. So Pranc gave it a push, and then a harder one, and all at once it opened wide and the Prince and the Snooping Bug staggering into the room saw in the middle of the floor a white-haired old gentleman lying on his back.



"Shut the door," commanded the old gentleman, scrambling to his feet. "Now," he said, glaring at Pranc as he smoothed his clothing, "I suppose you know what you've done."

"No," said the Prince, "what have I done?" He looked at the old gentleman and then at the Snooping Bug. The old gentleman was very red in the face and the Snooping Bug seemed to be dreadfully worried. He took Pranc into a corner and whispered in his ear.

"Don't be frightened," he said, rather hoarsely, "but you upset a peer of the realm when you opened the door. He was peering through the keyhole at you before he said 'Come in,' and you should have peered through the keyhole at him before you did come in. I don't know whether I can get you off or not. I ought to have warned you."

"You certainly ought," said the Prince. "How was I to know he was at the keyhole? It seems a very queer thing for an old gentleman like that to do."

"Not at all," put in the old gentleman. "Ain't

I the First Lord of the Keyhole and head of the House of Peers? And don't all the Peers of Snoopania peer through keyholes? Eh?"

"I don't know," said Pranc.

"Well, they do," continued the old gentleman, "the same as the members of the House of Commons *listen* at keyholes. Where have you been all your life, anyway?"

And then the Prince told him where his home was and how the Snooping Bug had brought him to Snoopania. "But," he added, "I think I'd like to go back, if you don't mind."

"Oh, come now," put in the Snooping Bug, "you've only just arrived." He turned to the First Lord of the Keyhole. "I think he's worried for fear you're going to have him punished for knocking you over. Are you?"

"Certainly," snapped the First Lord of the Keyhole. "The dignity of the peerage must be maintained."

"Well, I don't think it's fair," said the Snooping Bug, hotly.

"Of course it isn't fair," retorted the old gentleman. "We never do anything fair in Snoopania. You know that. If we did we wouldn't snoop, would we?"

Then he clapped his hands and six very jolly looking gentlemen entered in a single file. "This is the Committee on Extermination," said the First Lord of the Keyhole, turning to the Prince. "The Chairman will arrange the details of your execution."

"With pleasure," said the Chairman of the Exterminating Committee, who was the jolliest looking man of them all. Then he patted Pranc on the head and asked in a kindly tone when he would like to have his head cut off.

"What!" exclaimed the Prince, with a startled expression.

"When," repeated the Chairman, "would you like your head cut off?"

"Never," shouted Pranc, as loud as he could.

"Never," repeated the Chairman of the Exterminating Committee, looking rather pained. "Oh, but I say that won't do at all. You must fix a time. We can't cut your head off unless you do. It wouldn't be legal."

"Indeed," said Pranc, with a sigh of relief. "Well, I'm very glad to hear it."

And though every member of the Committee on Extermination argued with him, and the First Lord of the Keyhole shook his fist at him and sputtered like a fire-cracker, he simply would *not* say when he would like his head cut off.

"Well," said the First Lord of the Keyhole to the Chairman of the Exterminating Committee, "we'll have to appeal to the King about the matter. This boy doesn't know what he wants."

"Oh, yes, he does," said the Snooping Bug.

"He does not," thundered the First Lord of the Keyhole.

"He does, too," retorted the Snooping Bug, "and if you see the King, we'll see him, too."

So everybody started off for the palace and never stopped until they stood outside the monarch's sitting-room. "Wait a moment," said the Chair-

man of the Exterminating Committee, "until I see whether he is busy." Whereupon he put his eye to the keyhole. "Yes," he said, straightening up again, "he is quite busy snooping under his bathroom door."

"But," said Pranc, "what's the use of that?"

"What's the use of anything?" snapped the First Lord of the Keyhole. "Practice makes perfect, and the more you snoop the better you can do it. The King of Snoopania does not believe in wasting his time, sir."

And sure enough the monarch did not, for when they opened the door and went in, he had his head in the fireplace.

"Oh, how do you do," he said, pulling it out again.

"Are you very much engaged?" inquired the Chairman of the Exterminating Committee.

"Well," said the King, "I only just got through with the bathroom and I did want to finish the chimney this morning, sure, but it doesn't matter. What is it?"

"This boy," said the Chairman of the Exterminating Committee, "is to have his head cut off but he won't say when. He doesn't know what he wants, so we'd like to know if you know."

"Of course he doesn't know," put in Pranc, impatiently. "I'm the only one who knows. And besides what is the use of asking a king who spends his time peeking up chimneys? I never heard of a king doing such a thing."

Well, if the Prince had walked up to the monarch and boxed his ears he could not have astonished him or the rest of the party more. For a moment no one said anything, they just looked at each other in horror, and then the King turned red, white and blue in the face with rage.

"You—you—you—' he bawled, glaring at Pranc, "you're an imitation snooper. You don't know the first principles of snooping. What are you doing in Snoopania anyway?" Then he yelled for his soldiers to come and cut the Prince's head off at once—at once. He repeated it twice so they would not misunderstand.

But the Prince did not wait to see whether they understood or not, no sir-ee. He was thoroughly disgusted with snooping, snoopers and Snoopania, and determined to get back to his Fairy Godmother's cottage at ence if it could possibly be done. So when the King's soldiers entered the room to seize him he waited until they came very near, and then he twisted the ring the Fairy Godmother had given him, and bing—flat on their backs the soldiers fell, bumping their heads like anything.

"Good-by," cried Pranc, waving his hand to the Snooping Bug, "I'm going home."

"Wait," shouted the Snooping Bug, "I'll go with you."

"No," replied the Prince, "I've had quite enough of snoopers and snooping bugs. You stay where you are."

Then he jumped over the prostrate soldiers and out the door of the palace. Up the street he ran until he met the postman. "Where's the elevator?" he panted.

"Straight ahead," replied the postman, "but if you'll wait a moment I'll tell you what was on some of those postal cards I spoke about."

"I can't," said Pranc, "the King's soldiers are after me. I'd like to, but—"

"Yah!" With a shout a whole regiment of the King's soldiers rushed around the corner and made a grab at him, but quick as a wink Pranc twisted the Fairy Godmother's ring once more, and bing—over went the soldiers on their backs and hit their heads bang, and by the time they were able to sit up and rub the bumps, the Prince had reached the elevator. "Up," he shouted, and up the elevator went with a leap, and a moment later stopped inside the preserve closet.

"My!" said Pranc, as he opened the closet door and stood once more in the Fairy Godmother's cottage, "my, but I'm glad to be back."

Then he went out on the front porch where the Fairy Godmother was sitting in a rocking chair knitting, and told her all that had happened to him.

"I'm not surprised," said the Fairy Godmother.

"When I got back from the christening and found that the Snooping Bug had disappeared and you also, I knew you had done something you should not have, and that you were probably having a time of it."

"Yes," said the Prince, "and if it had not been for your ring I would have had a worse time. I'm awfully sorry I lost your Snooping Bug."

"Oh, that's all right," said the Fairy Godmother. "Any time you'd like to borrow my Crying Bug or my Sulking Bug, just help yourself."

"No-thank-you," replied Prance. "NO-thank-you! No more bugs for me."

## THE WRONG JACK

There are lots and lots of boys named Jack and some of them have been quite celebrated, like the Jack who planted the famous beanstalk. But the Jack this story is about was just a bright, jolly little fellow who lived in a country home with his father and mother, and who had never had any adventures more exciting than catching minnows in the creek or getting stung by a hornet in the garden.

And so you may be sure he was very much surprised to find himself in a terrific fix one summer morning as he was digging for worms back of the barn where a wild grapevine grew. And this is how it happened.

Every time he wanted to go fishing he always dug for worms in the same place, and as a consequence he had made quite a deep hole, but of course he never thought anything about *that*. Or at least



Out of the hole came a giant

he did not until his spade struck something hard and a rumbling voice said: "Ouch!" And then the ground under his feet began to heave and heave, and before he could gather his wits and run away, out of the hole came a giant, head first and scowling like anything. And even then Jack did not run—he was too frightened. He just stayed where he was and trembled.

"So," said the giant, rubbing a lump over his left eyebrow, "you're the chap who thumped me, eh? What do you mean by such actions?"

"Noth—noth—nothing," stammered Jack. "I—I—I didn't know you were in there. I—I—I was digging for worms."

"I don't believe it," growled the giant. "You were digging to find out if I was dead. Well, I'm not, even if my fall did drive me underground. And now I'll thank you to hand over my magic harp, and my money bags, and my hen that lays the golden eggs."

"I—I—I don't know what you're talking about,"

said Jack. "I haven't got your harp, or your hen, or your money bags. All I've got is a can of worms and a fishing line. You must have mistaken me for somebody else."

"Hum!" said the giant, looking at him sharply, "well, maybe I have. What is your name?"

"Jack," answered the boy.

"Jack," bellowed the giant. "Did you say Jack?"

"Why—why, yes," replied our hero. "What—what of it?"

"What of it?" repeated the monster, "why everything of it. You tell me your name is Jack and yet you say you don't know anything about my harp, or my hen, or my money bags. I suppose you'll say next you didn't cut down the beanstalk and almost make me break my neck?"

"Never," shouted Jack, "I never did. I never had a beanstalk. It was that other Jack in the story. You needn't blame it on me."

And he said it so earnestly the giant hesitated.

"Well," he grumbled, scratching his head and frowning at the boy, "I may be wrong but it seems very queer that your name should be Jack also. And it seems even queerer that you should be digging in the exact spot where I fell down the bean-stalk. Hang it all, I don't know what to think." Then suddenly he clapped his hands together like thunder. "I know what I'll do, I'll take you back home and ask my wife. She has a wonderful memory for faces and she can tell if any one can." And with that he caught up Jack and commenced to climb the grapevine.

"Oh," cried the boy, peering out of the pocket where the giant had tucked him, "this isn't a bean-stalk, this is a grapevine and it isn't very strong. You'll have another fall if you don't look out."

"I can't help it," said the giant, "I must find my wife."

And he went on climbing, and climbing, and climbing, which much surprised Jack for he had no idea the grapevine was so high, and he had thought sure it would break when the giant got upon it.

But it did nothing of the sort, and at last they came to the end and found themselves standing before the giant's house.

"Now," said the giant, "we'll soon find out whether you're the wrong Jack or not."

But when they reached the front door he gave a shout, for there he saw a sign which said:

## TO LET

and found that all the shutters were shut and not a soul about.

"Zounds!" yelled the monster, "what is the matter, and where is everybody? And what does 'to let' mean?"

"Why," said Jack, crawling out of the giant's pocket and sliding down his leg to the ground, "I think it means that your house is for rent to anybody that wants it. Your wife must have moved away."

"What?" bawled the giant, "my wife gone and my house left for any one that wants it? Oh, wait until I catch her!" Then he stamped his feet and tore his beard, and carried on something dreadfully, until he had to sit down on the grass to get his breath.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "the only thing to do is to hunt until we find her, for I can't find out whether you're the wrong Jack until she sees you. So come along and we'll see if the neighbors can tell us anything."

Whereupon he set off across the country with Jack running by his side until presently they came to a tumble-down cottage.

"Here is where Goog, the ogress lives," said the giant. "She belonged to the same sewing circle as my wife so maybe she knows where she is." And he knocked at the cottage door.

"Why, hello, Blunderbuss!" exclaimed the ogress, smiling a very bristly sort of a smile as she answered the summons. "Where did you come from? I thought you were dead."

"Indeed," said Blunderbuss, "and I suppose my wife thought the same thing and that is the reason she has locked up my house and marked it 'to let."

"Exactly," replied Goog. "She waited and waited after you fell down the beanstalk and then decided you had broken your neck. So she closed the house, sold the family jewels to get spending money, and then started out to enjoy herself for once in her life."

"Started out to enjoy herself," repeated the giant. "That's a nice way for a lady to act when she thinks her husband has broken his neck. And where is she now, pray?"

"I couldn't say," replied the ogress. "Seeing as we belonged to the same sewing circle I invited her here, but she just sniffed and said she had no use for the lower classes now, so I guess she is cutting up high jinks somewhere."

"Scandalous!" said the giant, "but I am not going to give up searching until I find her, for I want to know whether this boy is the one who planted the beanstalk and took my things. He says his name is Jack, but beyond that I can't be sure, but I think my wife could tell the moment she saw him, she has such a fine memory. Good morning."

So they bade the ogress good-by and resumed their travels until presently, as they rounded a bend in the road, they saw before them a towering castle of brass, all gleaming in the sun.

"This," said Blunderbuss, "is the house of the Duke of Dishwater, and I'm going to see if my wife is here, for although he is very, very swell, he is also very, very poor, and it is quite possible that Mrs. Blunderbuss with all that spending money, has been able to break through his reserve and get invited for the week end."

With that he struck the castle gate a blow with his fist and it swung open admitting them to a huge courtyard where the Duke, an exceedingly haughty looking gentleman with a Roman nose and a ruff about his neck, stood waiting for them.

"How do you do?" cried the giant, "is my wife here? If she is I'll pull your castle up by the roots and twirl it around my head. If she isn't, I'll have to hunt elsewhere. Hurry up, say what you've got to say. I have no time to lose."

"Why—why—well—well—" stammered the

Duke, "I—I—I think under the circumstances I had better say she is *not* here."

"All right," said the giant, "then I'll be trotting along, but I'll leave this boy with you. Put him in your safe deposit box, for when I find my wife I'll have need of him."

Then kicking the gate open again he strode through it and down the road out of sight.

For a moment the Duke of Dishwater looked at Jack, and Jack looked at the Duke of Dishwater. After which the nobleman took off his wig and mopped his head nervously with his handkerchief. "My, my," he said, fretfully, "whoever heard of pulling one's castle up by the roots. Wretched taste, I call it."

"But," said Jack, "he won't do it if Mrs. Blunderbuss isn't here."

"Quite so," said the Duke, "but Mrs. Blunderbuss is here. She has been visiting us for a week."

"Then," said Jack, severely, "you told a fib."

"Not a regular fib, no sir-ee," replied the Duke, "I only said 'under the circumstances' I had better

say she wasn't here, so he wouldn't pull my castle up. And now the next thing is to see she isn't here when he comes back. Excuse me."

With that he rushed indoors and yelled for his wife to tell the giant's wife to pack up her things and go away right off.

But when the Duchess told Mrs. Blunderbuss as politely as she could that it was time for her to go home, the giant's wife was perfectly furious.

"Never in all my life have I been so insulted," she cried. "The idea of inviting a person to pay you a visit and then telling her to go home. Well, I'm not going to do it. I'll stay here whether you want me or not."

"But," said the Duke of Dishwater, "you don't understand. Your husband is hunting for you and if he finds you here he'll pull my castle up by the roots."

"What do I care about your old castle," snapped Mrs. Blunderbuss. "And anyway, he couldn't because he's deader than a doornail; so there."

"Oh, no, he isn't," put in Jack. "You may think he is, but he isn't. That fall down the beanstalk only stunned him."

And then he told the giant's wife how he had dug Blunderbuss out and how the giant had brought him back because he thought that Jack was the boy who had run off with his property. "And," went on the boy, "he won't believe I am the wrong Jack until you tell him so. And of course you can see I am the wrong Jack, can't you?"

"Maybe I can, and maybe I can't," said Mrs. Blunderbuss, crossly. "Anyway it's your fault he has come back and that's enough for me to worry about without worrying to remember whether you're the wrong Jack or the right one, I reckon."

And having made that announcement she marched upstairs to her room with her nose in the air.

"My gracious," gasped Jack, "if that isn't the meanest thing I ever heard of."

"Well," said the Duke, "you needn't scowl at me. 'Taint my fault!"

Then, taking out his snuff box, the Duke of Dishwater helped himself to a generous pinch and marched upstairs with *his* nose in the air.

Well, as you can see, this left Jack in a very unhappy frame of mind, for how in the world was he ever going to get back home unless he could prove to Blunderbuss that he was not the Jack who had planted the beanstalk? And the more he thought about the matter the more perplexing it seemed, so finally he decided to run away and try to find the place where the grapevine grew up to the giant's house, and then climb down it quickly before the giant came back.

So when the Duke called downstairs to tell him to hurry and get in the safe deposit box, he said "all right," but instead of going upstairs he slipped out the front door into the courtyard. Then, while the man-at-arms on guard was busily talking to one of the scullery maids, he softly unbolted the gate and ran off as fast as he could. All

with the giant, and then when he reached the cottage of Goog, the ogress, although he knew it was very dangerous to do so, he could not resist peeking in at the window. And there she was, uglier than ever, stirring the big pot over the fire and singing in a horrible cracked voice: and this is what she sang:

Oh, Jack, he took the money bags
I don't know where they are.
And Jack he took the giant's harp
And carried it afar.
And Jack he took the magic hen
But when it was unloosed,
It did what every chicken does,
It came back home to roost.

And when I want some golden eggs—
(Real solid gold—I weigh 'em)
I go to Blunderbuss's house
And get his hen to lay 'em.

And then chuckling, she put on her bonnet, and took her stick and came out of her cottage door, not noticing Jack peering around the corner. And away she went over the hill to the giant's house.

When she got there she pulled open a shutter and climbed in, after which she scattered corn over the floor, and presently into the room scampered the magic hen and after it had eaten the corn it began to lay one golden egg after the other until the ogress had her apron full. And Jack, watching through the shutter, was awfully astonished and understood what she meant by singing about chickens coming home to roost. Evidently the stolen hen had come back and no one knew it but Goog, and she was getting rich on the eggs it laid.

"My," said Jack to himself, "wouldn't the giant be mad if he knew?"

So when the ogress had gone back to her cottage to put away her golden eggs, Jack pulled open the shutter and climbed into the room where the magic hen was going about clucking proudly because she had laid so many eggs. And before the hen knew what was going to happen he grabbed her, tucked her under his arm, climbed out of the window again and ran off to see if he could find where the grape-vine was.

"Gee whiz!" he chuckled, "if I can only get home with this hen we'll be so rich my father won't have to work again. We can have automobiles and steam yachts and everything."

And then all of a sudden he remembered that the hen did not belong to him and that if he took it he would be stealing, so after thinking over the matter a moment he decided it would not do and turned back to the giant's house to replace what he had taken. But before he had gone half way he heard a trampling sound and saw the giant coming toward him carrying the Duke's castle in his hand with the roots of it dragging on the ground, and with the Duke, and the Duchess, and Mrs. Blunderbuss hanging out of the windows, wailing and wringing their hands.

Quick as a wink Jack thrust the hen beneath his blouse, and presently the giant stood towering over him.

"So," shouted Blunderbuss, dropping the castle to the ground with a bang, "you ran away, did you? Well, now, I think I'll give every one of you to the ogress to put in her pot. And I think," he continued, looking at Jack more closely, "that you'll please her especially, for you certainly are fatter than when I saw you last."

"All right," said Jack, feeling dreadfully frightened, but trying his best not to show it, "do as you like, but if you do you'll be sorry, for I know where your magic hen is and I sha'n't tell you if you give me to the ogress."

"Well," shouted the giant, "where is my hen?"

And then Jack told him how he had followed the ogress and watched her take the golden eggs, and maybe the giant was not furious when he heard that.

"Right in my own house," he bellowed. "Well, it won't take me long to get my hen now."

"Oh," said Jack, coolly, "your hen isn't there. I took her away and hid her, and when you let me go home, and when you forgive your wife, and when you replant the castle, I'll give her back, but not before."

And having said that, he remarked "ho, hum,"

whirled about on his heel and whistled carelessly as though he did not care whether the giant accepted his offer or not, but of course he did care, and so did the Duke, and his wife, and Mrs. Blunderbuss, but when they saw Jack let on that he did not care, they let on, too, and said "ho, hum" and whirled about and whistled, too.

And of course when the giant noticed that apparently nobody cared a whoop what he did or what he did not do, he did just what they wanted him to do, and promised everything Jack asked, in order to get back his magic hen.

"Very good," said Jack, "then here she is." And opening his blouse he pulled out the giant's property and handed it to him.

"Ho, ho," growled the giant, "so that's what made you so fat, eh? Well, I suppose there's nothing to do but to tell you where the grapevine is."

"All you have to do," he said, "is to climb straight down and you'll be home in ten minutes, but before you start I wish you would come with me to the ogress's cottage so I can have proof when I accuse her of stealing the golden eggs my hen laid."

So Jack, and the Duke and the Duchess, and Mr. and Mrs. Blunderbuss hurried off to where Goog lived, and the giant, pointing to Jack, told the ogress what the boy had seen.

"And now," he bawled, angrily, "you'll just hand back those eggs and hand 'em back quick."

"Dear me," replied the ogress, "I'm awfully sorry, but they're all in the pot boiling. Look in and you can see for yourself."

And when the giant bent over the sizzling pot she gave him a push and in he went head over heels. "Ouch!" he roared, trying to jump out of the scalding water.

"No, you don't," shrieked Goog.

But when she tried to push him back he grabbed her and bing—into the pot went the ogress also, and in about four minutes both the giant and the ogress were stewing and steaming, and boiling, and that was the end of them. And when Jack saw that, he thought it was time for him to leave, so he stole away to where the grapevine grew and climbed down it as quickly as he could. And you may be sure when he got to the bottom he took the ax and chopped down the grapevine just like the other Jack chopped down the beanstalk.

## THE SECOND STORY BROTHERS

No doubt you will think this story begins in a very strange place when you learn that it starts on board a Chinese junk or ship, as it sailed up a muddy Chinese river on its way to the city of Ki Yi.

Now most Chinese ships are dingy and dirty but this particular junk was just the opposite. Its sails were new, its decks neat and clean, and all because it carried a mandarin of high rank on his way to a wedding feast in the distant town. Very fat this mandarin was, and very smiling, and the wedding presents he carried were enormously valuable—gold and silver, and silks and jewels—packed away in his cabin; and the sight of them made the mouths of the captain and crew water. So finally the sailors and their commander determined to throw the mandarin overboard and take the presents for themselves.

However, as Chinese people are always polite,

no matter what the circumstances, instead of going below and seizing him without another word, they sent the cabin boy, Dong, down with a note requesting the pleasure of the mandarin's presence on deck at once and expressing their deep regret that they would have to put an end to him.

"Ahem!" remarked the mandarin, as he finished reading the note, "how very kind of them."

Then looking over his horn spectacles he examined Dong, the cabin boy, as he stood before him. "I'm awfully sorry," he said, "that a boy like you—you can't be more than seven—and such a nice looking boy, too, should join in such a wicked conspiracy. How would you like to be drowned?"

Dong shook his head. "I wouldn't like it," he said.

"No more do I," replied the mandarin, "and yet, unless you save me, I shall be."

"But," said Dong, "how can I save you? I would if I could, but I am only a boy."

"That makes no difference," said the mandarin; "if you are a brave boy, you can do it."

Then he handed Dong a large fan and told him to go up on deck and fan the captain and the crew with three big sweeps and they would dissolve like mist. "I'd do it myself," he continued, "but I'm afraid they'd seize me before I could get a chance to do it and throw me overboard. But of course they will not suspect you."

So Dong, trembling with excitement, took the fan and climbed the ladder to the deck.

"Well," asked the captain of the junk, "is the mandarin coming?"

"No," replied Dong, opening the fan with a jerk, "he is not. He declines your invitation and says he prefers to remain in his cabin with the wedding presents."

"Oh, he does, does he!" bawled the captain. "That's what we get for being polite."

Then he shouted for the crew to follow him and started for the mandarin's cabin, but Dong, all ready with the fan open, quickly stepped in front of him, gave three big sweeps, and pish! the cap-

tain and the entire crew of the junk disappeared completely.

"Gracious!" gasped the boy, closing the fan quickly for fear he might fan himself, "wasn't that awful?" Then he ran down to the cabin and told the mandarin what he had done.

"Ah," exclaimed the mandarin, in a tone of great satisfaction, rubbing his hands together, "I'm very glad to hear it, and I'm sure they are better off where they are, wherever they are. And now let me have my fan back, please."

And then the moment he got his fan back he stood up very straight and rapped the palm of his right hand once with it, and to Dong's amazement there appeared at his right side another man exactly like him. Then he rapped the palm of his left hand twice and there appeared at his left side another man exactly like him. Whereupon the three men bowed to each other affably and then shook hands.

"Permit me," said the mandarin, "to introduce

my two brothers, Sin Sum Tu and Sin Sum Wen. My name is Sin Sum. And while I am explaining things to you let me say that I am *not* a mandarin; that I am *not* on my way to a wedding; and that the goods I have are *not* wedding presents."

"What," exclaimed Dong, "not a mandarin and not going to a wedding? Then what are you?"

"I—that is, we," replied the supposed mandarin, "are the Second Story Brothers, the cleverest porch climbers in China. In other words we are robbers, and famous ones, too. Why we've even written a song about ourselves. It goes like this." Throwing back his head he sang and his brothers joined in:

The sailor sings of the ocean blue,
For that is the proper thing to do.
The soldier sings of the battles fought
With a hip hurrah as a soldier ought.
But, oh, our song it beats all others—
The song of the Second Story Brothers—
And this is the way the ditty closes
As we sing it softly through our noses:

Look out for your money bags and diamond studded pin, sir. Look out, for the outlook is that some night we'll look in, sir. Ask your fathers what to do, or better, ask your mothers. Be prepared to guard against the Second Story Brothers.

"Well," said Dong, when they had finished, "I think it was a very mean trick you played on me. See what I did to the captain and the crew because I thought you were a mandarin and they were going to rob you. And here you are, a robber yourself."

"Quite true," said Sin Sum, "I admit it was a mean trick, but no meaner than the captain was going to play on me. And as for yourself you can have a much better job with us than you had before."

And with that he told Dong that when the junk got to Ki Yi they were going to stay on it in the day time and at night they would rob the houses of the wealthy people. "And all you will have to do," he continued, "is to remain in the cabin and sell the stolen property we bring you, to the various customers that call. Now how does that strike you, my boy?"

"No, sir," replied Dong, "I shall not do it. I

may be only a cabin boy, but I'm an honest one. I have no desire to become a robber."

"But listen," put in the other two Second Story Brothers, "think how famous you may get to be. And if you should get caught and be beheaded, they'd put your picture on souvenir postals, perhaps."

"I don't care," said Dong, "I'd rather make my living some other way."

"Well, you're not going to do it," snapped Sin Sum, angrily. "You're going to make your living with us, and we're not going to coax you any longer, either. And if you try to run away I'll fan you into nothing like you did the captain and the crew."

So Dong had no choice but to join the robbers, and the next night after the vessel got to Ki Yi, Sin Sum made him go with him on a looting expedition.

"I just want to show you how it is done," he said, "in case one of us gets sick or something, so you can take his place."

Then he led the way ashore and presently Dong found himself standing before a handsome build-

ing surrounded by a high wall. "This is the Viceroy's palace," said Sin Sum, "and I am going to steal the family jewels."

"But how will you get over the wall?" inquired the boy.

"Oh, that's easy," replied Sin Sum. "All I have to do is to fan a hole in it."

So taking out his fan he waved it three times and instantly part of the wall melted away. And then after they had passed through the gap he fanned another hole in the front door, and in a jiffy they were upstairs in the Viceroy's bedroom.

"Of course," said the robber, "when there is a porch I prefer to climb to the top of it as a second story man should, but when there is none I just fan my way in."

By this time he had fanned most of the bureau drawers open and in a moment more had found the family jewels. Then having found them, he fanned them also, and pish! they disappeared, case and all.

"Goodness," exclaimed Dong, "now you have

done it. What did you dissolve them for?" Sin Sum chuckled. "Wait till we get back to the boat and I'll show you."

As he spoke the Viceroy and his wife began to toss about in their bed and it was evident that the conversation was beginning to awaken them.

"Quick," said Dong, "let's get out or they'll catch us."

"Huh!" said Sin Sum, "they'd better not. If they wake up and make any fuss, I'll give them a fanning they won't forget."

And no doubt he would have dissolved the regal couple without the slightest hesitation if Dong had not coaxed him out of the palace and back to the junk.

When they got there they found that Sin Sum's two brothers, who had also been out burglaring, had arrived before them.

"Now," said Sin Sum, "let's count up what we got to-night."

Taking a little book from beneath his sash he turned the pages. "H—I—J—jewels," he said.

"Let's see how many raps for jewels. Ah, here it is, seven raps for jewels."

Then he rapped the palm of his hand seven times with his fan and the next moment he was holding the casket containing the Viceroy's precious stones.

Then he turned to his brother Sin Sum Tu. "What did you get?" he asked.

"Gold, and lots of it," answered Sin Sum Tu.

So Sin Sum looked in the book and found that it took five raps to produce gold, whereupon Sin Sum Tu rapped *his* hand with *his* fan five times, and a big pile of gold poured into it and spilled over on the floor of the cabin.

"Now, Sin Sum Wen," said Sin Sum, "it's your turn. What have you got?"

"Well," said Sin Sum Wen, "I hate to tell you but I got nothing but pies and cakes. I broke into a baker's shop thinking to rob his cash drawer, but I guess business was bad, for the drawer was empty, but rather than come away without anything, I fanned all his pies and cakes, although you may not think it worth while to produce them."

"Oh, yes," said Sin Sum, "they are better than nothing. We can eat them for supper."

Then he took his book and found that pies and cakes required eleven raps, and Sin Sum Wen rapped his hand eleven times with his fan and in about twenty seconds there were enough refreshments in the cabin to last a week.

"Ah," said the Second Story Brothers, picking up the dainties and piling them on the table, "now we will have a feast."

And with that they started in and ate, and ate, and ate; lemon pie, apple pie, cocoanut pie, cherry pie, chocolate cake, cinnamon bun, jelly cake; in fact every kind of pie and cake a baker makes, and in about an hour each of them had about every kind of a stomach ache that every kind of a pie and cake makes, and were rolling around howling with pain.

Now Dong, while he had eaten some of the goodies had not eaten much, for not being very happy he was not very hungry, so he was not made ill like the others. And presently as he saw that they paid no attention to him, he decided that here

was his chance to run away. So he slipped out of the cabin and over the side of the boat, and made off into the city as fast as he could to the police station, for he knew when the Viceroy woke up and found his family jewels gone, there would be an awful row. And if he showed the police where to find them the Viceroy could not punish him for being with Sin Sum when he stole them.

When he got to the police station, however, the officer at the door told him that Ho Hum, the Chief of Police, was taking a nap and could not be disturbed.

"But," cried Dong, "I can show you how to catch the Second Story Brothers who have stolen the Viceroy's family jewels, if you will come with me."

"What!" shouted the officer, "they stole the Viceroy's jewels?"

Then he ran off and wakened Ho Hum at once.

"Waugh!" yawned the Chief of Police, "what is this I hear? The Second Story Brothers have stolen the Viceroy's jewels and you will show us how to catch them?"

"Yes," said Dong, "but you'd better hurry up before they find out that I have come to tell you about it."

So Ho Hum, the Chief of Police, and a number of his officers strapped on their roller skates and with Dong hurried off to the boat where the Second Story Brothers were just recovering from the effects of the stolen pies and cakes. And very pale and miserable they looked sitting against the cabin wall when the police burst in and confronted them.

"Surrender!" shouted Ho Hum.

"Quick!" cried Dong, "take their fans from them or it will be the worse for you."

Ho Hum, the Chief of Police, scowled. "See here, boy," he said, "are you the Chief of Police or am I? The idea of telling me what to do! Why, I was arresting folks before you were born."

"But," began Dong, "won't you please listen,

"No," bawled the Chief of Police.

"Good for you, old sleepy head," shouted the Second Story Brothers.

Then they leaped to their feet, gave three waves of their three fans, and pish!—Ho Hum and all of his officers disappeared.

"Now," said Sin Sum, grinning wickedly as he turned to Dong, "we'll attend to you, my son. We'll teach you how to go off and tell the police about us."

"Shall we fan him into nothing?" asked Sin Sum Tu and Sin Sum Wen.

"Not yet," replied Sin Sum, "not until I've laid him across my knee for about five minutes and given him something to remember me by."

With that he made a rush for Dong, but Dong, half scared out of his wits, dived under the table, then behind the chairs here and there like a squirrel, and Sin Sum, who was fat and short winded, could not catch him. Then his two brothers joined in, but they were even fatter, and besides the pies and cakes they had just stuffed had left them in no con-

dition to run a race, so do what they would they could not catch the boy. And Dong, seeing that they could not, began to grow bolder, and presently, as Sin Sum made a violet grab at him he also made a grab at Sin Sum and snatched his fan and his book from his sash. Then like lightning he turned and whipped the fan open, gave three quick sweeps with it at the robbers, and pish!—they disappeared as neatly as the police had, and Dong was left the sole occupant of the cabin.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed, all out of breath, but nevertheless highly pleased with himself, "I did for them that time."

Then he opened Sin Sum's producing book, found the page where it said "police" required four raps, and rapping the palm of his hand four times, Ho Hum and his officers appeared once more, looking rather pale and nervous after their strange experience.

"Well," said Dong to the Chief, "I guess you wish you had done as I told you and taken the fans away from those robbers."



He turned and whipped the fan open 145

Ho Hum rolled his eyes. "Don't say a word," he replied. "I feel like arresting myself, missing such a fine chance to capture the Second Story Brothers. Dear me, I'm afraid I'll never catch them now."

"Oh, yes, you will," said Dong. "Just you watch."

With that he struck the palm of his right hand once with Sin Sum's fan, and instantly at his right hand stood Sin Sum Tu, and the moment he appeared Dong snatched his fan from him. Then he rapped his left hand with Sin Sum's fan twice and instantly at his left side stood Sin Sum Wen, and Dong quickly snatched his fan also.

"Now," he said to the robbers, "tell me how to produce Sin Sum or I'll fan you both into nothing again."

So the robbers told Dong to rap his forehead once with the fan and Sin Sum would appear. And sure enough, the moment Dong rapped his forehead, there before him stood Sin Sum. And the next moment Ho Hum and his officers pounced on

the Second Story Brothers and tied them securely.

Then everybody set off for the Viceroy's palace, Dong carefully carrying the stolen jewels. By the time they got there it was morning and the Viceroy and his wife having just come down to breakfast, were listening to the butler tell them how the front door had a hole in it and that he guessed some one had been in the house the night before. But not until Dong and the police and the Second Story Brothers entered the dining room and Dong had handed over the jewels, did they know they had been stolen.

"Suffering chopsticks!" shouted the Viceroy; "to think of my house being robbed. Some one shall suffer for this!"

And as he said that he looked straight at the Second Story Brothers, which made their knees knock together very much for they knew of course he was talking about them, and they did not like the way he pronounced the word "suffer" at all. Then having put the captured robbers in a first class uncomfortable frame of mind, the Viceroy turned to

Ho Hum, grasped him by the hand and called him a hero.

"Stop!" interrupted the Chief of Police, "I cannot let you say that. No one enjoys being a hero more than I, but the blood of my truthful ancestors compels me to state that the boy who stands before you is the only hero in this affair. If it had not been for him the whole police force would be nowhere."

Whereupon he told the Viceroy how Dong had brought them back after the robbers had made them disappear, and also brought the robbers back so they could be arrested.

"Well, well," exclaimed the Viceroy, giving Dong a most admiring glance, "if that isn't just like something you read about. If we only had more boys like you in China, China might amount to something. Hum! How would you like to be adopted?"

"I shouldn't mind," replied Dong.

So right then and there the Viceroy of Ki Yi adopted Dong into his family, and told him if he

minded his P's and Q's—particularly his Q's—he might be Viceroy himself some day.

And the chances are if you visit China in the years to come you may find that Dong has become Viceroy, for you must admit that if he was smart enough to put an end to the career of the Second Story Brothers, he was certainly smart enough to become a Viceroy or even something better.

## THE IMAGINARY ISLAND

One morning the Emperor Fuss of Fizz sat on the front porch of his palace rocking impatiently back and forth. Evidently he was waiting for somebody. By and by when he had rocked so many times his rocking chair was beginning to squeak, the royal necromancer, Wist the Wise, an aged gentleman wearing a gorgeous gown of office, came hurrying up the royal avenue.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Emperor, "so you've come at last, have you? It's lucky for you that I'm a good natured monarch.

"I'm awfully sorry to have kept you waiting, your majesty," replied the necromancer, bowing low, "but the commander-in-chief of your army had a toothache, and I had to wish the tooth out for him and believe me, it was some job."

"Well," said the Emperor, "you have a harder job than that before you. My son, Prince Frip, has been reading about desert islands and insists on having one at once to discover. So get to work, for as you know whatever Frip wants he wants with all his might."

Alas, Wist the Wise knew it only too well. A good part of his time he was kept busy exercising his magic arts to provide amusement for Prince Frip, who was a very lively young person, and who got tired of a thing almost as soon as he got it. As a consequence the wizard had often wished he might get rid of the boy forever, for he was afraid that some day Frip would ask for something he would be unable to give him, for even a magician has his limits. So this time the royal necromancer was determined to fix the Prince so he would not bother him any more.

"Did you say an island, your majesty?" he inquired of the Emperor.

"I did," replied the monarch, "and a desert island, too, with plenty of strange and wonderful things on it to interest a boy. I want to keep Frip busy this time." \*

"So do I," said the wizard, grimly. "But as you know, your majesty, the kingdom of Fizz is far inland, and desert islands are only found in the sea. If you want desert islands, you must go where desert islands bloom."

"Oh, I must, must I?" retorted the Emperor, angrily. "Whom do you think you're talking to? You have that desert island ready for Frip to play with to-morrow morning, or I'll have you made into an Irish stew."

The royal necromancer shuddered. "Well," he said, "I'll do my best, but whether you stew me or not, I simply cannot provide an out and out, really true island. At the best it will only be an imaginary one. Will that do?"

"I don't care what it is," said the monarch, "so long as the Prince can lose himself on it for a while and not bother me."

So the next morning when Prince Frip commenced to ask when he was going to get the desert island he had been wishing for, the Emperor was able to tell him he would have it that very day. And when the royal necromancer made his appearance a short time afterward, the prediction came true. Leading the Prince out upon the palace lawn, the wizard placed him with his face towards the east. Then Wist the Wise rolled up the right sleeve of his gown and began whirling his arm around and around as though he was going to throw something. After he had done this about a hundred times he stopped all of a sudden with his finger pointing straight ahead of him, and told the Prince to look and tell him what he saw.

But Prince Frip did not trouble to tell the royal necromancer anything. He just gave one joyful yell and set off toward the pebbly beach that had appeared in front of him. A beach flooded with sunshine and with a shimmering sea beyond—blue in some spots and green in others—and with a most delightfully mysterious looking island showing on the horizon. Drawn up on the beach was a jaunty little sail boat. With a vigorous push the Prince had the boat into deep water. Into the craft he tumbled. Puff, puff, came a stiff and salty breeze.

The sail flattened, the boat heeled over, and in a moment was cutting its way through the dancing waves with the Prince sitting at the rudder, smiling as he had not smiled for many a day.

But had he known what the royal necromancer had done, he would have been frowning instead of smiling, for Wist the Wise when he told the Emperor that he could not provide a real island, had not spoken the truth. If he had conjured up a real island only certain things could have happened on it. But on the imaginary island which he had provided, anything could happen. And when anything can happen there are bound to be some very strange adventures. And so the wizard felt pretty sure that Frip would have a tough time before he got back again.

However, the Prince, suspecting nothing, sat in the little sail boat as it went on and on, coming nearer and nearer to the island all the while, until finally he cast anchor in the prettiest little cove you ever saw, and taking off his shoes and stockings, waded ashore.

"My," he exclaimed, as he looked about, "isn't this splendid!"

To the right and left of him the beach stretched away in a glittering curve. It looked as though it might be made of gold dust instead of sand, and the reason it looked that way was because it was made of gold dust. Tons and tons of gold dust were there, enough to buy out the greatest millionaire in the world. But the Prince did not know it, and if he had known it he would not have cared, he was too busy watching a short, squatty looking man with a dark brown complexion, driving a stake into the beach a short distance away, on which was a sign:

## REAL ESTATE LOTS FOR SALE

When the man had made the sign secure he turned about and saw Frip. "Hello," he cried, coming toward him, "when did you arrive?"

"Just now," said Frip. "There's my boat."

"Oh," said the man, "so you came in a boat, eh?

Very commonplace—very. *I* came on a Christmas tree."

Now you may think it was decidedly queer for a person to say such a thing as that, but the Prince did not, because when he was close to the stranger he saw he was nothing more or less than a Ginger-bread Man, although unusually large for his species.

"Yes," went on the Gingerbread Man, "I came on a Christmas tree, and I tell you it was rather exciting."

"I should think so," remarked Frip.

"Of course it was a mistake that I got overboard," said the Gingerbread Man. "All they meant to do was to throw the Christmas tree overboard after the celebration on the ocean liner. But I was fastened to the top and they forgot to take me off. Well, I floated for days and days and had about decided to try and lose my reason to keep from going insane, when, without the slightest warning, up out of the sea, right under my nose, popped this island."

"What do you mean 'popped this island'?" asked the Prince. "It didn't really pop out of the ocean, did it?"

"It certainly did," replied the Gingerbread Man. "One moment I was straining my eyes looking for an island, and the next moment there it was."

"Then," cried Frip, excitedly, "it must have been just when the royal necromancer created the island for me to play with."

And with that he told the Gingerbread Man how Wist the Wise had made the island by magic at the command of the Emperor. "And," he went on, "it was mighty lucky for you that I happened to ask my father for a desert island, otherwise you might be floating about the sea yet."

"Yes," said the Gingerbread Man, "it certainly was and I cannot thank you enough, for it not only saved my life, but it has given me a chance to go into business for myself." He pointed to the real estate signs. "It seemed a shame for all this land to go to waste so I've marked it out into build-

ing lots, and as the different people are shipwrecked here, as of course they will be, I'll sell them the lots. See?"

"Yes," said Frip, "I see. But suppose they won't buy the lots?"

"Then," said the Gingerbread Man, firmly, "they've got to get off the island. Business is business. I found the place first and it belongs to me."

"Belongs to you," cried the Prince. "Well, I guess not. Why, it was 'made' for me. Didn't I just tell you it was made for me?"

"Oh, yes," said the Gingerbread Man, "you told me, but that doesn't make it so, does it? And I did get here first, you can't deny that. And findings are keepings, you can't deny that, either. And whoever wants to stay here has *got* to buy a lot." And having made that announcement, he turned on his heel and walked away, frowning like anything.

"I suppose," said the Prince to himself, "he's mad at me now. But I don't care if he is, the

island is mine and whoever gets shipwrecked here can stay if they want to, lots or no lots."

Then he turned on his heel and walked away in the opposite direction to that taken by the Gingerbread Man.

Now as you know an island is an island—it may be a round island, or an oblong island, or a square island—but if it is an island and you start at a certain place on the seacoast and walk long enough, you are bound to come back to the very place where you started. And that is exactly what happened to Frip. After he left the Gingerbread Man he went on walking, and walking, and walking, until after a bit he came to a place that looked very familiar and he saw by the real estate sign that it was the same spot he had started from, except that something had happened to it, which was that a bonfire was burning there and that running round and around the fire was the Gingerbread Man. And my, how fine he did smell for the fire had warmed him enough to freshen him up.

"Hello," said Frip, sniffing hungrily, "what's the matter with you? My, you do smell nice!"

"Oh, I do, do I?" said the Gingerbread Man, keeping on running, "then I suppose you'll join the cannibals and help eat me."

"Cannibals!" exclaimed the Prince, "what cannibals? I don't see any cannibals."

"Perhaps not," replied the Gingerbread Man, "but you can easily see their footprints on the beach, can't you?"

And sure enough there were the prints of bare feet all about the bonfire, and now that Frip had noticed them he saw to his surprise that fresh footprints were being made all the time.

"why—hey, is anybody here?"

And the minute he said that there was a blood-curdling yell and upon his vision burst a band of coal-black savages with waving plumes on their heads and spears in their hands.

"Oh," he gasped, "goodness gracious!" Then turning about he started to run away as fast as he



Upon his vision burst a band of coal-black savages 161

could, but when you are surrounded by savages it is not so easy to run away, and presently Frip found himself running around and around the bonfire in the opposite direction to that taken by the Gingerbread Man, each one of them pursued by a towering cannibal. And no one knows how long they might have kept it up if at last the Gingerbread Man had not bumped into him, cracking himself badly and almost knocking the Prince down. And at this the cannibals howled with glee.

"Now," said the Cannibal Chief, as he watched Frip trying to get his breath, "perhaps you'll tell me why you ran so. Was it because we shocked you? I was afraid we would."

"Well," said Frip, "you certainly did sort of shock me. And then—"

"I knew it," said the other. "That's the reason we make ourselves invisible when strangers are about. We hate to shock folks. Listen."

We always try with all our might To keep completely out of sight When folks like you, got up in style, Come visiting this desert isle. For well we know that we at best Are far from being overdressed.

And so until we get a chance
To find a way to get some pants,
And maybe too, a fancy vest
And derby hats, and all the rest,
All we can do is weave a spell
And make ourselves invis-i-ble.

"That," said the Cannibal Chief, "covers the case completely. In other words, we're the most refined savages you ever met."

"Then," said Frip, "if you're so refined, what do you want to be cannibals for? And why do you wish to eat that poor Gingerbread Man? That's not very refined."

"Not very refined—I admit it," responded the Cannibal Chief, "but very necessary, for meals come before manners. And speaking of meals, I was thinking of asking you to join us at dinner. We'll have the Gingerbread Man for dessert."

"Oh," cried Frip, "I couldn't think of eating the Gingerbread Man, though I must say he smells awfully good when he's warmed up."

"That's all right," said the Cannibal Chief, "you won't have to eat the Gingerbread Man, in fact, you won't be here to do it. We're going to eat you first."

Now if Frip had chanced to sit down on a hornet and the hornet had got mad about it, it would certainly have made him jump, but nothing to what the remarks of the Cannibal Chief did. Indeed they almost froze him stiff and his eyes fairly popped out of his head.

"Eh?" he gasped—"why—what—say—why you—you don't mean to eat—eat me?"

"If you will join us at dinner—yes," said the Cannibal Chief, politely. "But of course if you have another dinner engagement—"

"I have," put in Frip, hastily, "I have a whole lot of 'em. And—and I'm not a bit hungry, so I simply could not join you at dinner."

"Well, supper then, or breakfast," responded the

Cannibal Chief. "We'll call it whatever you want. We'll even call it a little side snack, if you wish. You surely can't have engagements for every one of those things."

"Yes, I have," said the Prince, desperately, edging away. "I have engagements for everything, day and night. I haven't a second to spare. And besides, my father, the Emperor of Fizz, is waiting for me to take a walk and if you stop me he'll—he'll put you in prison."

"Pooh," put in the Gingerbread Man, suddenly, "his father isn't here."

"I didn't say he was," replied Frip, "but he's waiting for me at home."

"Well, that's quite another matter. Lots of things are waiting at home. No doubt a taxicab is waiting for your father outside his palace. And I dare say there's a woodpile in your backyard waiting for you to do some chopping. And your mother, no doubt, is waiting for you to come back. And the hired girl is probably waiting on the table.

But here, nothing waits. So you and your friend, the Gingerbread Man, kindly back up against that real estate sign and let the fire grill you a little. We don't care for *cold* meals."

Well, you can easily imagine in what frame of mind the Prince was when he heard that. Here was a fine ending to his adventure. When he had asked for a desert island he had expected to have an exciting time of it but not this sort.

"My, oh my!" he groaned. "I wish I had stayed at home and played with my regular playthings and not asked for a desert island. This is what comes of wanting something that isn't meant for boys."

"Yes," said the Gingerbread Man, "and this is what comes of landing on something that isn't meant for gingerbread men. I wish now I had stayed on that Christmas tree."

"Well," said Frip, as the cannibals pushed him back to back with the Gingerbread Man, "I'm sorry we quarreled over those building lots."

"Don't mention it," said the Gingerbread Man,

"and I'm sorry you are going to be eaten ahead of me."

Then they shook hands solemnly, and the Gingerbread Man's hand was so soft and sticky that one of the fingers came off in Frip's clasp. And just for a moment Frip thought of eating it, for he had had no breakfast that morning, and then shocked that he should think of such a thing, he tossed it away.

The next instant one of the cannibals picked it up. "Yum, yum," he exclaimed as he took a bite. Then he passed the morsel on to another of the band, and before the finger had gone half around, the whole group of cannibals were simply wild over the delicious flavor of the Gingerbread Man.

"Ow! Yow!" they shrieked. "Gibblety! Goody!"

Then with another shriek they all rushed at the poor Gingerbread Man and tearing him away from the horror stricken Prince, commenced to gobble him up as fast as they could. And because there was so little of him and so many of them, each one

of the cannibals fell to fighting the other in order to get his share of the tempting meal. And long after the last crumb of the Gingerbread Man had disappeared, they were still fighting furiously, until, as cannibals when they start to fight never know how to stop, they killed each other, and Frip was the only person left alive on the beach of the desert island.

And when that happened you may be sure it did not take him long to wade out to his boat and set sail for home, for he had had quite enough of *that* place.

"Hello," said the royal necromancer, feeling very much annoyed as the Prince landed on the imaginary shore in front of his father's palace, "how on earth did you get back so soon? You should have stayed longer. You've missed seeing a lot of things."

"I don't care if I did," said Frip, "for what I did see was quite enough." And when he said that it seemed to him he could still hear the whoops of the

## THE IMAGINARY ISLAND

invisible cannibals as they scrambled for the crumbs of the Gingerbread Man.

"Oh, ho," said Wist the Wise, smiling cheerily, then you don't care for imaginary islands, eh?"

"No," said Frip, "I don't. That is, I don't except in story books."

## THE DANCING PEARL

The Dancing Pearl was the name of a beautiful lady, and she danced every evening and Saturday afternoons in the palace of the Viceroy of Chow Chow. That is, she did until the Hermit of Hong carried her off by stealth one night to his cave in the mountains.

Now the Hermit of Hong hated crowds and conversation, but he adored music and dancing, and after he had stolen the Dancing Pearl he just used to sit and bang the cymbals while he smoked his water pipe and watched the Dancing Pearl dance until it made his eyes swim. And he never gave a thought to the way the Viceroy must feel at being deprived of his dancing girl. But if the Hermit did not dwell upon the matter, the Viceroy did, and the minute he found the Dancing Pearl was gone, he went to see the celebrated Mongolian

wizard, Hoo Hoo, who had his office on the main street of Chow Chow.

But when he entered the wizard's office he was much disappointed to find that the wizard had just gotten married and that his wife would not let him take any case which had a lady in it.

"I'm awfully sorry," said the wizard to the Viceroy, "but as you are a married man yourself, you can easily understand my position."

"Of course, of course," replied the Viceroy, impatiently, "but that does not get me back my dancing girl, and I must have her back. There is no one like her. She is the poetry of motion and the soul of ecstasy. I'll give half my fortune to get her back."

"Well, in that case," said Hoo Hoo, "I'll have to take the job, for the half of your fortune added to mine will make me a very rich man. But I can only do the work by proxy—that is, my apprentice will have to do it under my direction—for I positively will not hurt my wife's feelings, not even for the half of your fortune."

Then he struck a gong and into the room walked a bright looking boy about eight years old with his pigtail neatly curled about his head.

"This," said the wizard, "is my apprentice, Floo.
I'll put him on the case."

"Not much," exclaimed the Viceroy. "Why, he is only a boy. You seem to think this affair of mine is mere child's play."

"Oh, no, I don't," said the wizard, "and if you think Floo is a child, you are very much mistaken. He has been taught his trade very, very carefully. Why, he can even tell how many hairs there are in your pigtail. Tell him, Floo."

And Floo, after examining the Viceroy's pigtail for a few moments, told him there were 3,672,491 hairs in it.

"There," said the wizard, proudly, "what do you think of that?"

"But," said the Viceroy, "how do I know he's right?"

"Well," responded the wizard, "how do you

know he's wrong? Have you ever counted the hairs in your pigtail, eh?"

"N-o," said the Viceroy, slowly, "but-"

"Then," said the wizard, "the less said the better."

So Floo was picked out to solve the mystery of the disappearance of the Dancing Pearl, and the first thing the wizard did was to give him a list of people in Chow Chow that might have carried off the dancing girl.

"To save time," he said, "you'd better turn 'em all into turnips at once, and then tell 'em you'll turn 'em back again if they'll confess their crime."

But after Floo had turned all the people into turnips and told them he would turn them back if they confessed, he found that every one of them confessed without a moment's hesitation, which made things very confusing, for when you transform a thousand persons and each one says he stole a dancing girl when only one dancing girl was stolen, you do not know what to think. So the

wizard told Floo he had better give up that line of investigation.

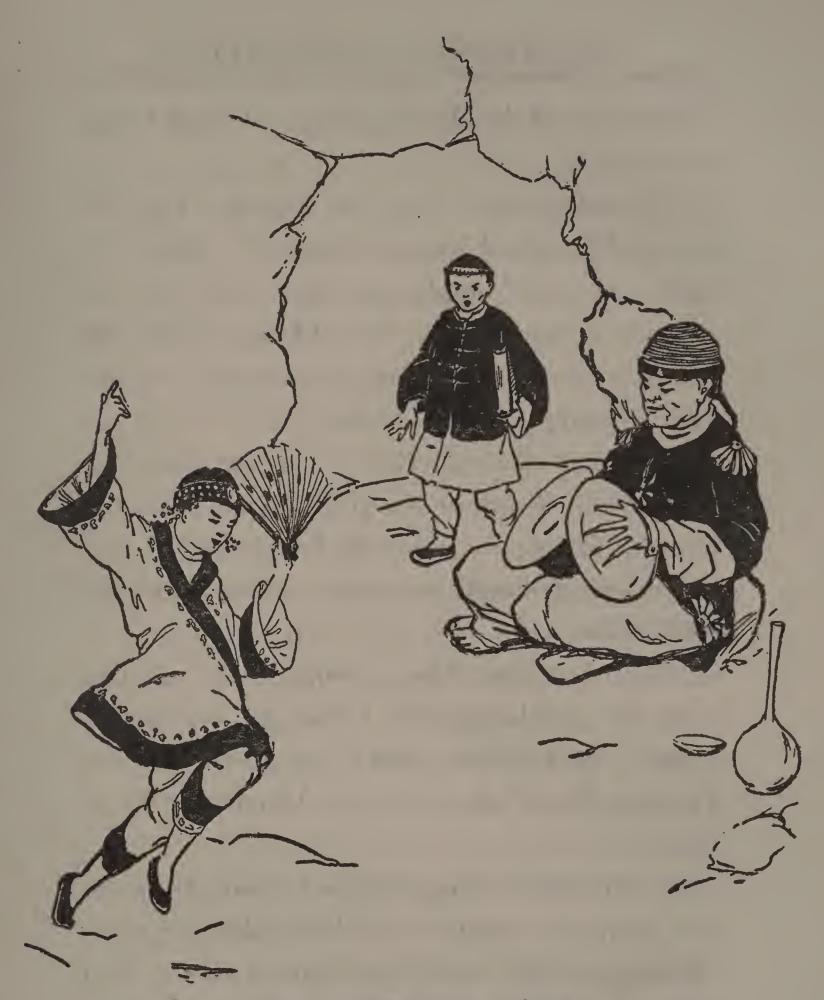
"Now," continued the wizard, "the next thing is to know what to do? What do you think?"

"Well," said Floo, "I believe it would be a good plan to pick out the person you think would never do such a thing as steal a dancing girl and go after him. And after you find him you'll probably find he did it. That is the way it always happens in the story books I've read."

"All right," said Hoo Hoo, "suppose we try it. But it's going to be a tough job, I'm afraid."

And indeed it was, for Floo and the wizard thought and thought until their heads ached trying to recall a person in Chow Chow who would not care to steal the Viceroy's dancing girl, but at last Floo gave a shout.

"I have it," he cried. "I know of one person nobody would ever suspect, and that is the Hermit of Hong. He hates everybody—ladies most of all —and the only thing he enjoys is being by himself. So if the story books are right he must be the one



He watched her whirl about

who carried off the Dancing Pearl. I think I'll go to see him."

"Go ahead, then," said the wizard. Then he handed Floo a book bound in leather. "Here," he said, "are a few simple instructions how to turn things into other things. I would suggest that you turn the Hermit into a lemon if you find it necessary. Good-by and good luck!"

So Floo set off for the Hermit's cave and when he got there he found, as you already know, that the Hermit of Hong had stolen the Dancing Pearl, and was enjoying himself immensely as he watched her whirl about.

"Sir," demanded Floo, sternly, "what do you mean by such behavior? I thought you were a hermit. And besides, don't you know that the Dancing Pearl belongs to the Viceroy of Chow Chow?"

The Hermit of Hong laughed scornfully as he put down his cymbals and laid aside his pipe. "Belongs to the Viceroy of Chow Chow? You mean, did belong to the Viceroy of Chow Chow.

She belongs to me now. And as for you, whoever you are, get out of my cave before I throw a toad at you." Then he clashed his cymbals again and the Dancing Pearl went on with her dancing.

Now you may think that Floo would have been discouraged to meet with such a reception, but such was not the case, for he had not been trained by the celebrated Mongolian wizard for nothing. No sir-ee, it took much more than that to discourage him. So all he did was to take out his book of instructions and look it over. Then he put some figures down on a piece of paper, after which he wiggled his fingers a moment and stamped his foot, and the Hermit of Hong was transformed into a large and very yellow looking lemon. And the moment that happened the Dancing Pearl stopped dancing and rushed up to Floo with a cry of joy.

"Oh," she panted, all out of breath from her late exertions. "I'm so glad you came. I'm completely worn out."

"I should think so," said Floo. "Have you been dancing ever since that old thing carried you off?"

"Yes," said the Dancing Pearl; "not even stopping for meals."

"Well," said Floo, "just you rest yourself and then we'll start back to the Viceroy's palace."

Then he told the Dancing Pearl who he was and why Hoo Hoo had sent him. "Of course," he continued, "the wizard will make much more money than I will out of this job, but I think I'll get my salary raised anyhow. And if I keep on being successful as I have been this time, I shouldn't be surprised if I made a big enough salary after awhile to get married. And if I ever get married I know who I'd like to marry."

And when he said that the Dancing Pearl hung her head and turned very pink. "Oh," she murmured, "I'm much too old for you. I'm almost twelve."

"What of it?" cried Floo, "I'm going on nine."

So the Dancing Pearl and the wizard's apprentice decided to get married as soon as Floo made enough money to support them, and they were so taken up with their planning that they quite forgot

the Hermit of Hong who had been turned into a lemon. But if they had forgotten about the Hermit, the Hermit had not forgotten about himself, and the minute Floo turned him into a lemon he began to turn himself into something else. Of course what he would have liked to do best would have been to turn himself back into a hermit, but when you have been transformed into something, you cannot turn yourself back into what you were first unless you have attended a college of magic. And as luck would have it, the Hermit of Hong had never been to college, and what little magic he knew he had picked up himself. Therefore, the only thing he could do was to turn himself into something worse than what he was. And as long as he could not be the Hermit of Hong and have the Dancing Pearl dance for him, he decided he might as well get even by being transformed into something that would stand in the way of Floo having the Dancing Pearl, so he turned himself into a monstrous Grammarsaurus or ancient Iff, for he knew if anything could stand in the way of a person doing something he wanted to, an Iff could, because an Iff not only stood in the way but it had the most disconcerting eyes. Yes, indeed, its eyes made you so dizzy after you had gazed into them a moment you fell down in a heap, whereupon the Grammarsaurus devoured you eagerly. But if you did not look into the creature's eyes you were all right, for the Grammarsaurus could not eat anything unless it was perfectly still. You see he had to keep his eyes shut while he was eating, because if he looked at what he was eating it went around and around, and it is awfully hard to make a meal of anything that is going around and around.

But of course Floo and the Dancing Pearl knew nothing about ancient Iffs and their habits. All they knew was that they adored each other and wanted to get married, and when the Hermit turned himself from a lemon into an immense creature that half filled the cavern, you may be sure they were very much startled.

"Oh," cried the Dancing Pearl, as the Gram-180 marsaurus gave a snort that made the cave tremble, "what's that?"

"What's what?" asked Floo, turning about. And then when he saw the ancient Iff you can well believe he said "oh" also.

"My gracious," he gasped, "how did that thing get in here? And—and where is the lemon I made out of the Hermit?"

"That," said the Grammarsaurus, icily, "is a mystery that I can easily solve. I am the hermit, likewise the lemon, and also something else beside as you may observe."

"I should say you were," said the Dancing Pearl.
"I never saw such a monster."

And then as she looked into the creature's eyes she felt a slight dizziness coming over her and found herself swaying, but as she was a dancer and accustomed to whirling about, the feeling passed off in a moment and she was as well as ever.

"Huh!" said the ancient Iff disgustedly, "why don't you turn giddy and fall down in a heap so I

can eat you? Everybody does that when they look into my eyes."

"Maybe they do," replied the Dancing Pearl, "but I don't. I'm too accustomed to whirling about to get dizzy so easy, so you'll have to make a meal of something else."

"All right," growled the monster, glaring at Floo, "then I'll eat your gentleman friend."

"Well, I guess not," said Floo. "I don't intend to look into your ugly old eyes, no sir-ee."

"Oh, don't you?" said the ancient Iff. "Indeed!" And with that he began to sing in a voice like a dozen bass drums:

In days of old when knights were bold
And dragons held their sway,
The knights all fought as warriors ought
To end the dragons' day.
And though the dragons spouted flame
The knights they whipped 'em just the same.

But in the days before the craze

For killing dragons flourished,

There were no tiffs with ancient Iffs

For Iffs were too well nourished.

And though some might ignore their size, None could ignore their goo-goo eyes.

So have a care—likewise beware,

And look at me just so—
You have no chance! My flashing glance
Will follow where you go.
Gaze in my eyes—get busy,
And let yourself grow dizzy.

As the Grammarsaurus sang the last verse, Floo, to his horror, found himself looking into the monster's glaring eyes, and the minute he did that he began to feel giddier and giddier.

"Phew!" he cried, "I—I—I feel so wobbly I can hardly keep my feet."

"Ha, ha," chuckled the ancient Iff, "of course you do. And presently you'll feel even more wobbly, and then—"

He turned to the Dancing Pearl. "Here," he remarked, "is where I eat your gentleman friend as I said I would. I guess you wish now he hadn't tried to take you from me when I was a hermit, don't you?"

"Indeed I do not," retorted the Dancing Pearl, "for I am not going to let you eat my gentleman friend. Your eyes may make him dizzy but unless he falls in a heap you cannot eat him. And as I never get giddy I shall hold him up."

And with that she put her arm about Floo's neck and drew his arm about her waist, and though his legs were very, very unsteady she managed to keep him from falling while the Grammarsaurus walked about smacking his lips enviously.

"Now look here," he said to the Dancing Pearl, "you seem to forget this is a private matter between your gentleman friend and myself, and I cannot see why you mix in it, I really cannot."

"Well, maybe you can't," replied the Dancing Pearl, "but I can. So you might as well shoo yourself away."

Then because the ancient Iff's song had so enchanted Floo he could not even close his eyes but simply had to keep on looking at the monster, she threw her beautiful hand-embroidered handker-chief over his face, and presently the effect of the

Grammarsaurus's stare passed away and Floo felt much better.

"Now," said the Dancing Pearl, "if I were you I'd look in my book of instructions and turn this nasty old thing into something less dangerous."

Floo groaned. "I can't," he replied. "This book only tells how to transform a person or a thing once. You see, Hoo Hoo did not think I would have to do it more than once."

"But," said the Dancing Pearl, "I don't see why you cannot transform this Grammarsaurus. You never transformed him before."

"Yes, I did," responded Floo. "I turned the Hermit into a lemon, and this monster is only a continuation of the lemon. In other words, the Hermit was first a lemon and now he's a Grammar-saurus, and the book doesn't tell how to transform him again."

Well, you may be sure this tickled the ancient Iff very much. As Floo and the Dancing Pearl conversed he had been listening with all his might, and when he heard Floo confess that he did not

know how to transform the monster into anything else the ancient Iff gave a loud cheer and capered about gleefully.

"My, my," he exclaimed, "but I have got you two in a fix. I may not be able to make you so dizzy you'll fall down and I can eat you, but that is no reason why I cannot scrouge you so I'll be able to gobble you up after a while."

And with that he began to crowd them against the walls of the cave something awful. It was just like having a house trying to walk over you, and Floo and the Dancing Pearl had to step lively to keep out of the monster's way.

"If we can only get outside," panted Floo, "I believe I can fix him, for I've thought of a plan."

"All right," said the Dancing Pearl, "I'll run to the back of the cave and when he comes after me you run outside and before he can squash me I'll join you."

"But," said Floo, "are you quite sure you can do it?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the girl. "I'm as light

as a feather on my feet. I haven't been a dancer for nothing."

And sure enough, when the Grammarsaurus, puffing and snorting, tried to scrouge her to nothing at the rear of the cave, she sprang swiftly aside, and in a moment was beside Floo outside the entrance. And then, just as the furious creature was galloping toward the door of the cavern to try to crush them outside, Floo, looking in his book, wiggled his fingers and repeated hastily:

Cave, bar the monster's rage—
Four, three, two, one.
Cave, turn into a cage—
Do, do it, doing, done.

Then he stamped his foot, and bing—instead of a rocky cave there stood before them a fine, big, iron cage, strong enough to hold anything, and inside of it was the Grammarsaurus.

"Oh," cried the Dancing Pearl, "what a delight-ful idea!"

"Yes," said Floo, "I just happened to think that even if I couldn't transform the Grammarsaurus there was no reason why I could not transform the cave. So I did."

"Yes," put in the Grammarsaurus, "I see you did." And after that he would not say another word, but sat and sat, and chewed his tail in vexation.

"Now," said Floo, "let's start for the Viceroy's palace."

So off they went, and when they got there the Viceroy of Chow Chow was beside himself with joy.

"Welcome, poetry of motion and soul of ecstasy!" he cried, swinging the Dancing Pearl high in the air.

And then when he learned how Floo had rescued her and how he wanted to marry her, the Viceroy said he had no objection whatever, provided Floo would let his wife dance at the palace whenever the Viceroy wanted her to. And as for the Grammarsaurus, he would be glad to buy the creature, cage and all, to put in the private zoo he had.

So the Grammarsaurus was brought to Chow

## THE DANCING PEARL

Chow and placed on exhibition, and Floo and the Dancing Pearl lived happily ever afterwards on the generous sum that the Viceroy paid for him.

## THE INHERITED PRINCESS

Once there was a little boy named Ting who, as this story opens, was just celebrating his eighth birthday. And you may be sure it was a pretty fine birthday celebration because Ting was the Crown Prince of Pouf and heir to the throne.

"Now, Ting," said his father the King, as they stood at the palace window watching the magnificent parade given in the Prince's honor, "I have another surprise for you. I am going to give you a chance to prove your princely courage by rescuing the Inherited Princess from the enchanted castle."

Then he told Ting that hundreds and hundreds of years ago, this Princess, who was just about Ting's age and quite beautiful, had been carried off by her uncle, a celebrated scoundrel with a magical education, and shut up in an enchanted castle with a twenty-headed Gallopus to guard her.

"My," said the Prince, "she must be quite an old lady by this time."

"No, indeed," said the King, "she is just as young as ever. One never grows old in an enchanted castle. But if *she* didn't grow old the wicked uncle did, so much so that he finally died of it. Then as no one had ever found a way to rescue the Princess, and as her uncle had stated in his will that she was not to be set free until she was rescued, the heirs of the wicked uncle had to let things go on as they were, so the Princess still remains in the castle with the twenty-headed Gallopus on guard."

"But," said Ting, "doesn't a Gallopus ever grow old?"

"Not that I ever heard of," replied the King, "or at least this one does not, for he still sits in the same spot in the castle yard as he did before I was born."

"Phew!" exclaimed Ting, "he must be a terrible creature."

"Well," said the monarch, "he isn't a thing to be

trifled with. And that is the reason I think it would be fine for you to celebrate your birthday by fighting him and setting the Princess free. Don't you?"

"H'mm," murmured the Prince, "I don't know. I can think of other things I would much rather do."

"Why, I am surprised," said the King. "I should think you'd be *glad* of the chance. I only wish some one had suggested the idea on *my* eighth birthday. Just think how famous you'll be if you conquer the twenty-headed Gallopus."

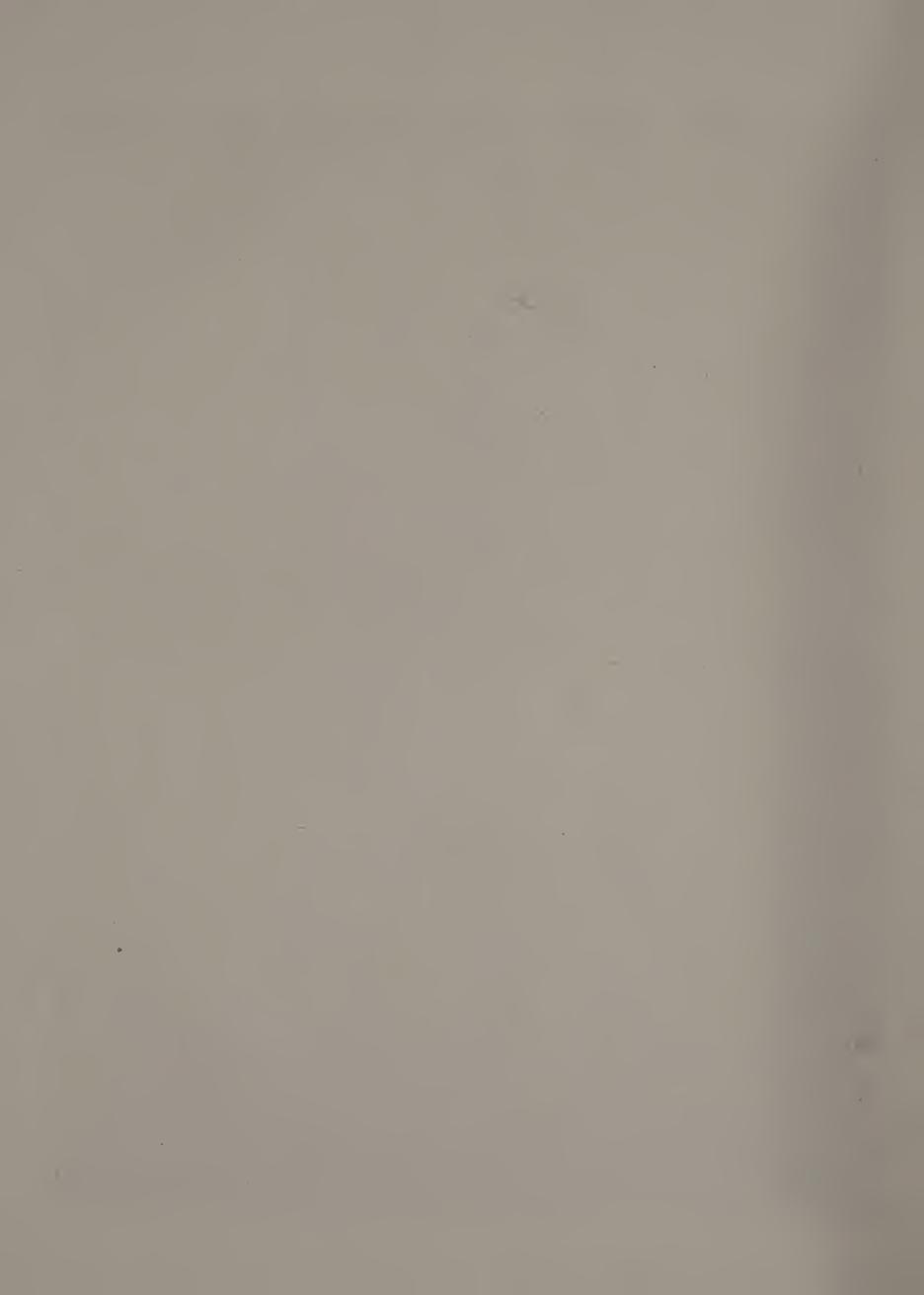
"Yes," said Ting, "but just think how I'll be if I don't."

"Pooh! Pooh!" remarked the Prime Minister, who sat on the other side of Ting, "that's no way for a prince to talk, especially as we've announced to the public that you are about to rescue the Inherited Princess from the enchanted castle."

"Yes," said the King, "and every one is talking about it, so you can't back out unless you wish to disgrace me."



The minute the parade was over he started off.



And of course, as Ting had no desire to bring disgrace upon his family, he saw he would have to fight the twenty-headed Gallopus whether he liked it or not, though how he was ever going to do it, he could not imagine. However, as the longer he thought about the matter the more discouraged he became, he finally decided to go and have a look at the monster and see what his chances were. So the minute the parade was over, he started off.

Now a twenty-headed Gallopus is shaped like a star with twenty points, and on each point is a head. And each head has two pop eyes, two big ears, a wide mouth with a complete collection of long, sharp teeth, and a turned up nose. And when a twenty-headed Gallopus wishes to show a person that he does *not* care for his society, he turns slowly about and stares at him fixedly with his forty eyes, which makes a person feel *very* uncomfortable. So you can easily imagine how Ting felt when he reached the enchanted castle and confronted the twenty-headed Gallopus in the courtyard.

"Well," cried the twenty-headed Gallopus, speaking with about ten of his heads and making a fearful racket, "what do you want around here?"

Whereupon the Prince told him how he was expected to rescue the Inherited Princess, and had come to see what the Gallopus looked like before he started to work.

"Oh, you did, did you?" roared the monster. "Well, what do you think?"

"I think," said Ting, "that you're the most awful thing I ever saw. You're enough to guard a dozen princesses and it isn't fair to ask a little boy of eight to fight you."

"It's not only not fair," said the Gallopus, "but it's downright mean, not to say ridiculous." Then he laughed with all his heads at once until the ground actually trembled. "Don't you know," he went on, "that I'd have to lose every one of my heads before the Princess could be freed? Even if you chopped off one or two it would be no use. I must lose *all* of them before the spell is broken."

And with that he burst into a rollicking ditty—

Three rousing cheers for a job like mine,
For I must confess it is simply fine
To sit all day and take your ease
And just do nothing as long as you please.
For who would dare to brave my wrath?
And who would dare to cross my path
To try and win this princess fair?
Oh, can you tell me who would dare?

"Well," said the twenty-headed Gallopus, when he had finished, "can you tell me who would dare?"

"No," said Ting, "I can't. I thought maybe I would, but I've changed my mind."

"And quite right, too," said the monster, "you show good sense, for it is certainly foolish to attempt what is impossible. And besides, the Princess is very happy in the castle anyway."

"How do you know?" asked the Prince.

"Well," said the Gallopus, "she has never complained, and even if she did I would be too bashful to listen to her. I don't know what it is, but it makes me dreadfully nervous to talk to girls. I get so confused and everything. Do you?"

"Oh, no," said Ting, "I like to talk to girls."

The twenty-headed Gallopus looked at him admiringly. "Hum," he said, "you're much braver than I thought you were. No wonder you thought you could fight me. And now I think you had better run along back home for I want to take a little nap."

But Ting had no intention of running back home just then, no indeed, for chancing to look up at the castle windows he had seen the Princess peeping out at him. And one sight of her was enough to make him want to stay there forever. So he told the twenty-headed Gallopus not to mind him but to go ahead and take his nap.

"I won't disturb you," he said. "I'll be just as quiet as a mouse."

"Very well," replied the Gallopus, "if you'll promise solemnly not make any noise or chop off any of my heads, I'll do it, for I need the sleep. One of my heads had the headache last night and it kept all the others awake."

And with that he wobbled into his cave and be-

gan to snore like twenty locomotives all starting from the station at once.

"My gracious!" gasped the Prince, "he needn't worry about the noise I make."

Then he hurried across the courtyard until he came to the window where the Princess was sitting.

"Hello," he shouted at the top of his lungs. "How do you do?"

"Very well, thank you," screamed the Princess, leaning out of the window. "Isn't it dreadful the noise that old Gallopus makes?"

"Terrible," yelled Ting, thinking how lovely she was, all pink in the face from shouting so. "I've come to rescue you."

"Oh, isn't that splendid!" shrieked the Princess, smiling at him. "Do you think you can do it?"

"Sure," bawled Ting, "I'll find out some way. I didn't think I could at first, but since I've seen you, I've simply got to."

And when he said that the Inherited Princess grew pinker than ever and did not seem to know

what to say. But even if she had known what to say she probably would not have said it for all of a sudden the snoring stopped and the twenty-headed Gallopus came hurrying out of his cave as mad as could be.

"Didn't you tell me you wouldn't make any noise?" he demanded of Ting, angrily. "You said if I took a nap you'd be as quiet as a mouse, and yet you've made such a rumpus it woke me up. Such a hooting and tooting I never heard."

"That wasn't me," said Ting. "That was you —snoring."

"I—snoring?" howled the monster, furiously. "Oh, that's—that's the worst insult yet. I never snore, sir, never. I—I wouldn't know a snore if I heard one. And even if I did snore it would sound like a harp or something like that, and not like a roll of musketry. The idea, telling me I snore!"

Thereupon, with every one of his twenty heads snarling, and his body whirling about like a pin-wheel, the Gallopus started for the Prince. And

the minute he started the Prince started also, in the opposite direction.

"Oh," shrieked the Princess, "he'll eat you."

"He'd—he'd better not," cried Ting, running around and around the courtyard as fast as he could.

"Bah!" shouted the Gallopus, "don't tell me what I'd better not do. And stop running so. How am I ever going to catch you if you run around so?"

All of which showed what a silly old thing the twenty-headed Gallopus was, for he might have known that Ting would not stop running around. Indeed, he ran so fast that the monster finally stopped and stood panting with his forty cheeks all puffed out. And then it was that the Princess leaned out of the window, extended her hand, and Ting, giving a leap, seized it and jumped in at the casement where she sat.

"Now," he jeered at the monster, "catch me if you can."

"I don't need to catch you," replied the twenty-

headed Gallopus, calmly, "the enchanted castle has caught you and that's enough, as you'll soon find out."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked the Prince, in a tone of alarm.

"Oh, nothing much," chuckled the monster, "only that in an hour you will begin to turn into a spider, that's all, but it's enough, I guess. Hee, hee!"

With another shriek the Princess fainted away, and as for Ting, he almost fainted too, at the thought of turning into anything so horrid.

"I don't believe it," he said, glaring at the Gallopus.

"Just as you please," answered the monster, "but when you're a spider you'll believe it. That castle was built to hold the Princess and nobody else. If anybody else goes in they turn into a spider unless they come out in an hour."

Well, you can imagine how Ting felt, and you can also imagine how the Princess felt when she came out of her swoon.

"I like you awfully, Ting," she said, "but really I'm afraid I could not like you as a spider."

"I should say not," replied the boy. "I couldn't like myself that way."

Then he pulled out his watch, looked at it and shuddered. "Only three quarters of an hour left," he groaned.

And there they sat at the window worrying and worrying and worrying, and wondering what to do. And underneath the window sat the twenty-headed Gallopus gloating and gloating and gloating over the way they were worrying. And finally the three-quarters of an hour passed and they knew if Ting stayed in the castle another minute he would turn into a spider.

"Oh, dear," said the boy, "I guess I'll have to go out and be eaten. It's bad enough but I think I'd rather be eaten than be a spider."

"Yes," said the Princess, "and I think I should, too, only I would like to disappoint that Gallopus. I know he'd much rather eat you than have you turn into a spider."

"Oh, do you think so?" said Ting.

"I'm sure of it," responded the Princess.

"Then," said the boy, "maybe I can make a bargain with him."

So he leaned out of the window and called to the monster: "you might as well go away now. I've decided to become a spider."

"What!" shouted the twenty-headed Gallopus, "why, you must be crazy. Why—why, it's an awful feeling to be a spider. It's much nicer to be eaten. Come on out and I'll swallow you whole and it won't hurt a bit."

"No," said Ting, "I think I prefer to be a spider."

"Oh, go on," said the Gallopus, looking awfully disappointed, "you can't mean it."

"Yes, I do," said the Prince, "although I might change my mind if you let the Princess go free."

"Never," cried the monster, gnashing his teeth.

"Very well, then," said Ting, "you'll not eat me." And he started to draw in his head.

"Wait, wait," shouted the Gallopus, "wait a



Underneath the window sat the twenty-headed Gallopus

moment. Let me think." Then after a moment he groaned. "All right, I'll do it, though I ought to be ashamed of myself. But it has been so many years since I tasted a boy I simply cannot resist the temptation. So come out and be eaten and the moment I gulp you down I'll go off to my cave and shut my eyes, and the Princess can come out of the castle."

And the instant the monster said that the Prince jumped out of the window, because he knew if he hesitated the Princess, who had been listening in horrified silence, would never let him be eaten to set her free.

"Ah, ha!" cried the Gallopus, smacking his twenty pairs of lips, when he saw Ting standing before him, "now I have got you." Then he burst into a roar of laughter. "I knew that story about the spider would fetch you. That's the reason I made it up."

"You made it up?" cried Ting. "Do you mean to say it wasn't true?"

With another laugh the Gallopus shook every

one of his heads merrily. "Of course it wasn't true, and only a ninny like you that would have believed it."

"Is that so!" cried the Princess.

And as she spoke *she* jumped out of the window and marched right up to the monster. "You wicked, wicked creature," she said, her cheeks flaming and her eyes sparkling like diamonds.

And as she stood there right in front of the Gallopus she looked so lovely Ting felt he would be willing to be eaten a dozen times for her sake. And as for the twenty-headed Gallopus, he blushed scarlet with confusion. Of course he had often seen the Princess at her window, but never before in the sunshine outside the castle where she was a hundred times as beautiful. So he just stared and stared with all his mouths open, and shuffled his hundred and twenty feet uneasily. And then all of a sudden his heads began to get dizzy, and he felt as though he would sink through the ground with bashfulness. And then—as the Princess, growing more dazzling every minute, advanced

still closer—bing—he lost his twenty heads entirely. Bing, bing, bing—each one went off like a balloon when it bursts, and nothing remained of the dreadful Gallopus to worry about.

"Hurrah!" cried the Princess, clapping her hands. "The enchantment is broken. I am free again and you will not be eaten after all, Ting. I wonder what ever made him lose his heads that way?"

"Why," said Ting, taking her hand and liking her more than ever, "don't you know? Because if you don't, just come to the palace and look in a mirror and you will soon find out."

And when he said that the Princess tucked her arm in his and marched him off to the palace as quick as she could.

"Well, well, well," cried the King, jumping off his throne in excitement when he saw them coming in, "if this isn't the great surprise of my life."

Then he patted Ting on the back and called him the bravest boy in the land. "To think of conquering the twenty-headed Gallopus and rescuing

## THE INHERITED PRINCESS

the Inherited Princess on your eighth birthday," he said. "I never, never thought you would do it."

"I didn't do it," said Ting. "The Princess did it all herself."

And after the King had learned all that had happened he patted the Princess on the back also, and then he pinched her cheek.

"I don't wonder, my dear," he said, "that the Gallopus lost his heads. And I guess I'll announce that you and Ting did it between you, for it's all in the family, anyway."

